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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 18 October 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 34: Questions relating to information (*continued*)

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Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

06-57635 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 34: Questions relating to information (*continued*) (A/61/21, A/61/21/Add.1 and A/61/216)

1. **Mr. Baaziz** (Algeria) said that the Department of Public Information (DPI) had made a significant contribution to the work of the United Nations in promoting peace, security and development and had helped establish a positive image of the Organization. However, it should not lose sight of the fact that the digital divide represented a significant obstacle to development for the developing countries. It was clear that a global strategy was required to establish equality in the area of information. The Organization should continue to work towards ensuring that all States had equal access to information and communications technologies (ICTs). The number of visitors to the United Nations website was a clear indication of the public's interest in the activities of the Organization. Multilingualism remained one of the main concerns of delegations and it was important to ensure that all six official languages received equal treatment.

2. It was significant that the Organization had increased its capacities in the area of radio broadcasting because radio remained the most effective communications tool in developing countries. Since the United Nations had a major role to play in promoting the principle of freedom of the press, additional funds should be allocated so that journalists from developing countries could join the Journalists' Fellowship Programme.

3. Finally, he said that, for developing countries whose ICT capacities were modest, the United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) were a valuable source of information, communication and documentation. It was therefore important to maintain the funding and staffing levels of those centres.

4. **Mr. Elsherbini** (Egypt) said that the United Nations had continued to make progress in promoting international cooperation in the field of media and information and that DPI had played an important role in disseminating information on the activities of the Organization. It was important to acknowledge the importance of multilingualism and to ensure that all six official languages were given equal treatment, with a view to promoting dialogue and understanding among different civilizations and cultures.

5. He emphasized the importance of further intensifying DPI activities in order to raise awareness — through objective reporting of the real situation — of the need for peace and stability in the Middle East region. Meetings such as the annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East represented an opportunity to promote dialogue and communication between Arabs and Israelis and to provide a better environment for the resumption of negotiations aimed at restoring stability in the region.

6. The United Nations also had a fundamental role to play in promoting international awareness of issues such as sustainable development, poverty eradication, human rights, women's rights and the rights of the child and development in Africa. The information centres remained important sources of information in the developing countries and any rationalization of those centres should be carried out in consultation with the host countries and should take into account the presence of the United Nations in the various regions of the world. DPI should continue to improve the information services of the Organization in order to strengthen cooperation and understanding between peoples and help developing countries achieve modernization.

7. **Mr. Al-Olaimi** (Kuwait) thanked the Under-Secretary-General for his report and commended DPI on the important role it was playing in helping to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries and on the policies and reforms it had adopted in the past few years.

8. He stressed the importance of such things as increasing cooperation between the United Nations and civil society; bridging the digital divide between the developed and developing countries; assuring the free and balanced flow of information; assuring equal treatment for all the official languages of the United Nations, including Arabic; focusing attention on and giving due importance to the question of Palestine; and full and timely payment by all States of their financial contributions to the Organization. He also cautioned against using the media to impose control or a particular ideology or to carry out campaigns that distorted or denigrated the religious beliefs of others, such as the one being carried out against Islam.

9. Kuwait had recently enacted a law that guaranteed the media more freedom and was committed to greater freedom for the media in a

manner that was consistent with the traditions of Kuwaiti society and its Arab and Islamic values.

10. **Ms. Kampa** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), expressed satisfaction with the various initiatives undertaken by DPI to restructure and revitalize its work and enhance communication between the United Nations and Member States, the media and civil society and welcomed, in particular, the efforts to reach out to the public and build effective partnerships with local, national and regional media. DPI had carried out an excellent campaign to promote the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The important role played by DPI in bridging the information gap between the Organization and the public and raising awareness of the Organization's role was reflected by the increase in the number of countries interested in joining the Committee on Information. Her Government appreciated the support it had received for its application to become a member of that Committee.

11. The ASEAN States would continue to provide support to the United Nations Information Service in Bangkok in disseminating information on the work of the Organization and publicizing and seeking support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) among ASEAN member States. DPI's efforts to undertake a comprehensive review and reorientation of its work were to be commended because they would contribute to the overall reform process of the United Nations. There was no doubt that a more effective use of ICTs would help achieve the objective of system-wide coherence.

12. Drawing attention to the series of seminars entitled "Unlearning Intolerance" organized by DPI, she said that those seminars had been effective in promoting dialogue and enhancing understanding.

13. It was important to focus on the accessibility of information in terms of both form and substance and to ensure that messages reached people on the ground. Traditional media, such as radio and print, were still essential for disseminating messages at the grass-roots level. However, DPI should also step up its efforts to develop and enrich the content of its website in local languages in order to reach a wider audience.

14. Finally, she said that ASEAN welcomed DPI efforts to establish effective partnerships with NGOs, academics and civil society and it noted with satisfaction the use of the Internet in communicating to schools and students and called on DPI to continue to initiate similar creative programmes.

15. **Ms. Yan** Jiarong (China) said that the coordinated work of DPI had strengthened the capacities of the Organization in the area of public information. Her Government was particularly appreciative of the emphasis on the culture of evaluation and the application of the Annual Programme Impact Review. It believed that the next stage of the Organization's public information activities should focus on the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome and on advancing the United Nations reforms. In the areas of economy and development, the progress of the reforms was lagging behind the expectations of numerous developing countries. DPI should publicize the progress and achievements of the Organization while at the same time directing more attention to issues relating to economy and development, with a view to giving impetus to the implementation of the MDGs.

16. The thematic public information campaign on the development of Africa should be intensified. One of the major challenges was to mobilize the international community to give more attention and support to the development of Africa. In that connection, DPI should consider putting forward a greater number of op-ed articles by the Secretary-General because they received widespread media attention.

17. It was important that DPI should play a bigger role in promoting understanding and dialogue among different civilizations, particularly in view of recent incidents such as that involving depiction of the prophet Muhammad in cartoons. In that connection her Government supported the "Unlearning Intolerance" series of seminars.

18. Outreach activities should be stepped up with a view to increasing communications and exchanges with Member States, civil society and the general public. However, when commissioning NGOs to organize film festivals at the United Nations, DPI should provide guidance and monitoring to ensure that the content of those films was satisfactory to all Member States.

19. **Ms. Lee** May Lin (Singapore) commended DPI on its commitment to inform and educate communities worldwide about the United Nations, and the creativity it had displayed in harnessing new technologies to broaden its scope. Given the diversity of sources of information available, the United Nations had to work

hard to make its voice heard, while maintaining its credibility and relevance.

20. The Department should also explore new ways to engage stakeholders and ensure that the message of the United Nations was broadly conveyed. One way would be to enhance DPI cooperation with Member States and with international, regional and local media organizations. The media outreach and training programmes for representatives of the media from developing countries were a step in the right direction.

21. **Mr. Win** (Myanmar) commended the Department of Public Information for addressing the strategic priorities of the Organization by disseminating information accurately and impartially. He argued that Member States should receive first-hand information on the important events affecting the United Nations through official channels that included DPI. He praised the efforts made by DPI to expand its outreach services through the targeted delivery of public information, enhanced use of new information and communications technologies and increased partnership with civil society while integrating the concept of evaluation at all levels of its work.

22. He also referred to the role of DPI in promoting peace, dialogue and development through sports, its use of Internet broadcasting as a means of delivering major United Nations events in real time and its role in providing information and information technology.

23. The Department of Public Information had carried out subprogrammes such as news, library and outreach services, in addition to communications campaigns on various subjects such as human rights, democracy and migration. Accurate, impartial and comprehensive information from DPI had helped Member States in addressing those crucial issues.

24. His Government attached great importance to its cooperation with the United Nations. The national development plan was aimed at accelerating growth and achieving equitable and balanced development, and reducing the socio-economic development gap between rural and urban areas of the country, while addressing the major aspects of the Millennium Development Goals. His delegation therefore hoped that the United Nations Information Centre in Myanmar would disseminate information on the activities carried out locally and the significant progress achieved in reaching the Goals.

25. **Mr. Althour** (Yemen) said that conflicts around the world severely affected the ability of governments and peoples to confront the numerous challenges that faced humanity such as poverty, hunger, and deadly epidemics. Facing those challenges required increased awareness, a culture of peace and cooperation, dialogue among civilizations, as well as respect for and acceptance of others and their holy sites.

26. Yemen was satisfied with General Assembly resolution 60/109 A-B, which, inter alia, underscored the importance of the United Nations information centres, particularly in developing countries. It was important to revitalize the information centre in Sana'a and to appoint a new director for the centre so the people of that geostrategically vital part of the world would be more aware of the Organization's activities.

27. His delegation was concerned at the lack of equal treatment for Arabic in relation to the other official languages and called on DPI to increase the use of Arabic in all of the Organization's activities without exception. In conclusion, his delegation welcomed and supported the strategic reorientation that DPI had embarked upon and that aimed to build partnerships with governments, civil society and the private sector in order to more effectively provide services to a wider audience.

28. **Mr. Bially** (Côte d'Ivoire) welcomed the efforts of the Department of Public Information in its various activities and drew particular attention to the communication strategy intended to raise awareness of the challenges facing the United Nations. Côte d'Ivoire fully supported efforts to ensure coherence in the information disseminated by DPI and the other bodies, and appreciated the simultaneous distribution of documents in the official languages of the United Nations.

29. He outlined what was needed in order to process and transmit information using high technology, pointing out that, since it was all very costly, developing countries were at a particular disadvantage when it came to communicating their views and values and thereby enhancing diversity in the sources of information. In order to bridge the digital divide, developing countries needed to develop their communications infrastructure and capacity, and to allow their media establishments to freely establish their own information and communication policy. If the international community believed that provision

targeted information, increased use of new information and communications technologies, and partnership with civil society would facilitate the realization of the MDGs then the capacity of the Department of Public Information should be strengthened in order to allow it to rationalize and optimize its activities.

30. However, all such efforts would be in vain unless developing countries enjoyed effective freedom of the press. His delegation was proud of the fact that in spite of the pervading political tension, journalists in Côte d'Ivoire did enjoy freedom of the press, thanks to the work of a national council that strictly protected the interests of journalists and their freedom of expression.

31. His delegation fully endorsed the concept of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order as an evolving process in the true service of mankind. He urged DPI to continue in its efforts to grant special attention to major issues of concern to the international community, such as United Nations reform, conflict prevention, self-determination of peoples, poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS, human rights and counter-terrorism.

32. **Mr. Al-Zayani** (Bahrain) said the media could play a vital role in many areas, particularly in relation to publicizing information on sustainable development. In order to do so, however, it was necessary to ensure that the stunning advances that had been made in information technology were not used to widen the digital divide between developed and developing countries. In fact, the United Nations, particularly through DPI, could play an important role in bridging that divide.

33. Recalling General Assembly resolution 34/182, he said that if the international community wanted to establish a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order, based on the free exchange and dissemination of information, it should put an end to the disparity between developed and developing countries with regard to the international distribution of news.

34. The difficulty in getting news to the widest audience possible in developing countries emphasized the importance of the traditional media as an easily accessible source of information. It was important not to neglect the role those media and United Nations information centres could play in promoting the noble mission of the Organization and raising public awareness of its activities. Those centres should not be closed, replaced by regional centres, or merged with any United Nations field office without consulting the host countries.

35. He concluded by calling upon the Department to continue implementing the special information programme on the question of Palestine until a just solution was reached.

36. **Ms. Mujuma** (United Republic of Tanzania) joined previous speakers in praising the work of DPI as the public voice of the United Nations, and extended her delegation's appreciation to DPI for taking into account the views of member States on the need to maintain information centres wherever possible.

37. As the digital divide continued to widen, and the international community contemplated improvements in the field of information and communications technology, there was need to address the concerns and special needs of developing countries. Tanzania believed that traditional means of communication should continue to be used for transmitting the message of the United Nations in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries.

38. The strong relationship between DPI and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) was encouraging, and she welcomed the guidance projects for the public information components of peacekeeping missions.

39. The importance of capacity-building and the improvement of technology to disseminate information were crucial. Tanzania appreciated the Journalists' Fellowship Programme and hoped that further resources would be allocated for that programme, so that larger numbers of journalists could benefit from it each year, particularly in those parts of the world that were disadvantaged in terms of technology.

40. **Mr. Mana** (Cameroon) commended DPI for the positive image it presented of the United Nations. Cameroon especially appreciated the campaigns highlighting issues such as sustainable development, HIV/AIDS, the development of Africa, human rights, including the rights of women and children, and, most particularly in view of recent events, threats to global peace and security, the dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace and tolerance. Much of the violence of the kind seen in recent weeks could be blamed on misunderstandings, prejudice and lack of communication. The Department could play a major

mediation role by advocating understanding and tolerance among peoples of different religions, as it had done in its recent series of seminars against intolerance. The historic importance of the new Human Rights Council had also rightly been highlighted by the Department.

41. Since traditional media such as radio remained the main source of information in many developing countries, the Department should strengthen its partnerships with local, national and regional broadcasters and produce programmes in local languages, which might dispel misunderstandings.

42. The United Nations information centres had the task of educating and raising awareness about the imperative of peace, which had prompted the founding of the United Nations itself. The information centre in Yaoundé, Cameroon, for instance, had recently used the occasion of the World Cup games to organize Internet discussions among young people from all nations about the place of sport in the promotion of peace and dialogue, using low-cost technologies it had been able to purchase. Any rationalization of the centres should be conducted in close consultation with the host countries and the other States they served. In Central Africa, the regional approach that proposed establishing an information centre in Angola for Portuguese-speaking countries should not in any way jeopardize the existence of the information centre in Cameroon, which had continuing importance for the French-speaking countries in the region and, in fact, should be strengthened.

43. **Ms. Traore** (Burkina Faso), congratulating the Department on its thoroughgoing reform, observed that although information was particularly important for the developing countries, yet unfortunately it was being undermined by globalization. The latter had not opened up access to information and communications technologies, but had exacerbated inequalities between the industrialized nations and the developing nations. The vast majority of people in her own country had no access to the new technologies.

44. Under such conditions, the United Nations information centres were crucial in making the Organization known and spreading its messages to local populations; and they served as a documentation resource for students, teachers and other professionals. It would be beneficial to rationalize the information centres provided the process was carried out as initially conceived. In the developing countries, the information centres should be kept and strengthened, and any rationalization should take place on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the States concerned within each region. Moreover, any human and financial resources arising from the closing of centres in developed countries should be redeployed to those in the developing countries.

45. The information centre in Burkina Faso also served three other countries — Mali, Niger and Chad. All four countries shared the same concerns, namely, the struggle against poverty and desertification and the promotion of health, security and development. Her Government supported the centre by offering — free of charge — premises and television and radio time for United Nations broadcasts. It also firmly intended to act on the texts adopted at the World Summit on the Information Society.

46. **Mr. Chabi** (Morocco) observed that information and communication should be at the heart of United Nations activities and that a culture of information should pervade its work at all levels. DPI had restructured itself to meet the demands of modern communication and had succeeded in improving its Internet sites and laying the basis for genuine multilingualism.

47. Information was particularly important, in the context of globalization as a channel for rapprochement between peoples and nations. The Department must work to that end by putting before the world a clear and realistic image of the Organization and communicating its ideals and goals.

48. In restructuring the United Nations information centres, it was necessary to bear in mind the importance of such centres in developing countries, which were deficient in the resources and infrastructure needed for the new technologies. Africa, which had been bypassed by the digital revolution and comprised only 1 per cent of Internet users, was fruitful ground for information and communication activities. Existing information centres should not only be strengthened but given more resources in order to overcome the digital divide. The information centre in Rabat, Morocco, was doing invaluable work in partnership with civil society, academic circles and the media.

49. DPI had refined its methods of work, activities and products by taking a new strategic approach based on focused dissemination of information and greater

use of the new technologies. The ultimate success of that promising approach remained, of course, to be assessed. The Department had also raised awareness of issues through its thematic campaigns regarding the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the question of migration. The question of Palestine would be another appropriate topic.

50. All United Nations bodies should be supported in their efforts to achieve genuine parity in the use of the official languages. The culture of multilingualism that was the pride of the United Nations was all the more critical in that language could be made a channel of peace and a factor in the rapprochement of cultures and regions.

51. The cooperation between DPI and DPKO served the basic mission of the United Nations, the maintenance of international peace and security. The aim should be to provide objective and impartial coverage of conflicts and make the local inhabitants understand the purpose of the peacekeeping operations.

52. **Mr. Tharoor** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information) thanked all who had taken part in a very rich debate on the work of his Department, demonstrating their deep commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. He believed that the growing partnership between the Department and the Committee on Information had been a key element in redefining the Department's role in a complex and evolving global media environment, paving the way for its renewal.

53. The Department had taken note of the approbation expressed but also of criticisms and constructive suggestions. There was a clear recognition of how important it was for the United Nations story to be heard and understood by people all around the world. While the Department would be happy to undertake a number of the additional activities suggested, it would need additional resources in order to do so.

54. Like the United Nations itself, the Department had embarked on a five-year process of reform and surmounted great obstacles in the process. The United Nations must continually reinvent itself to meet the needs of the times and reflect and even guide the priorities of a world in full evolution. As the voice of the United Nations, the Department of Public Information had done the same, offering a model of change within the Organization. It looked forward to the future with confidence.

Adoption of draft resolutions and decisions

55. **The Chairman** drew attention to chapter IV of the report of the Committee on Information (A/61/21), containing draft resolution A on information in the service of humanity, draft resolution B on United Nations public information policies and activities, and a draft decision on an increase in the membership of the Committee on Information.

56. *Draft resolutions A and B and the draft decision in document A/61/21, chapter IV, were adopted by consensus.*

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.13

General Assembly
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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 19 October 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

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06-57860 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

1. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that item 33 had been allocated to the Fourth Committee as usual but also to the Sixth Committee because the latter's legal expertise was required for consideration of the draft Convention on the criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission (A/60/980, annex III) drafted by the Group of Legal Experts on ensuring the accountability of United Nations staff and experts on mission with respect to criminal acts committed in peacekeeping operations. Following joint consultations, the Bureaux of the two Committees had asked the President of the General Assembly for a more specific allocation of work under the item.

2. He invited the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations to report on developments in that field so crucial to the United Nations since the Committee's last meeting to consider the reports of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/60/19 and Add.1) and to adopt resolutions 60/263 and 60/289. The Under-Secretary-General would be available at the close of the meeting for an informal interactive exchange with the members of the Committee.

3. **Mr. Guéhenno** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that the status of United Nations peacekeeping had evolved more than ever before in the past year, with over 93,000 peacekeepers currently involved in 18 operations, a number that would reach 112,000 with the deployments under way in Lebanon and Timor-Leste, and potentially 140,000 with an operation in Darfur. One hundred ten Member States were contributing military and police personnel, some for the first time; the inclusion of a naval component in one operation was another first.

4. The level of United Nations peacekeeping, with a budget of almost $6 billion, and the international attention it was receiving were unprecedented. That reflected Member States' commitment to a collective approach to addressing conflict. Such an approach, however, had to allow flexible responses targeted to the very diverse environments on the ground — ranging from a law-enforcement mandate in Timor-Leste, the monitoring of a ceasefire in Lebanon, the largest-ever election assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the recovery and reform assistance to the new Government in Haiti to the transition from a United Nations to a European Union peace operation in Kosovo. Yet a flexible response did not mean an inconsistent response, and the balance between consistent global engagement and specific implementation would always be a challenge that left no room for complacency.

5. The high demand for peacekeeping operations also reflected Member States' confidence in the improved planning and deployment of missions. United Nations peacekeeping could be swift and effective when backed by political will — as evidenced by recent operations relating to Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and southern Lebanon.

6. The unprecedented level of activity further evidenced a better sense of what peacekeeping could and could not do: it was never a substitute for a political process or an alternative to a Government's efforts to achieve peace. A case in point had been the national leadership shown by Africa's first elected female head of State, the Liberian President, who had worked in potent partnership with a United Nations peacekeeping mission and other international supporters.

7. The United Nations peacekeepers had become better at working with others because of a better appreciation of the effort required by many international actors and many sectors in order to move from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, as a country's needs and perspectives changed. The clearest example of the demand for joint action with regional organizations, for instance, was the partnership of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the African Union, most notably in the Sudan, which had led to the formation of an integrated joint action team by the two. Cooperation with the European Union, meanwhile, had also continued to develop in unprecedented ways, as in the election security assistance the European Union had provided in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the NATO-led military presence in Kosovo and Afghanistan, where the United Nations had only a civilian presence.

8. The question now was how to keep up with the global peacekeeping demand: the response would

affect the peacekeeping of the future, the authority and scope of the United Nations and the lives of millions. It must focus on two strategic priorities.

9. The first priority was to run the machinery of peacekeeping effectively, with greater professionalism and efficiency, in accordance with the reform programme he had set out the previous year in *Peace Operations 2010*. Progress had been made in a number of areas in the past year.

10. In the area of personnel, for example, the most important single step on the reform agenda would be the creation of a 2,500-strong cadre of qualified, experienced civilian peacekeepers trained in the Organization's regulations, who would be retained from mission to mission, and would give United Nations peacekeeping for the first time a stable baseline of mid-level management experts essential to any field operation. That proposal was now before the General Assembly as part of the Secretary-General's reform package.

11. Equally essential was the quality and baseline quantity of the military and police personnel so much in demand in recent operations. The recruitment of the Standing Police Capacity was well under way and, in a first phase, 25 outstanding professionals would be in place by mid-2007. At Headquarters, the burden of running the second largest global military deployment with only 12 Professional planners, however, was enormous, and the General Assembly would have to address the reinforcement of the Department's Military Division as a matter of urgency.

12. Effective performance by any peacekeeping personnel, of course, depended on the training they received. Better training courses had been designed and offered in the past year through the Integrated Training Service and a Brindisi-based team, a key element being the training and appointment of highly qualified field leaders.

13. A continuing concern was the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel. The Department was working closely with other departments and field structures to assess and mitigate the risks, and was exploring the usefulness of technical monitoring in particularly dangerous areas, but the issue of safety remained a serious one

14. In the area of doctrine, the Department had now developed a framework for incorporating lessons learned and best practices into actionable policy guidelines. When complete, its core policy document setting out the fundamental principles, objectives and conditions for the successful deployment and disengagement of United Nations peacekeeping operations would replace the very general peacekeeping guidelines dating from 1995. The Department had also launched an Intranet accessible from all 18 missions to allow the sharing and exchange of knowledge among all personnel; an upgraded version that would include feedback from the field would soon be available.

15. The Department had found that it must implement an integrated team approach within a robust organizational framework to manage its large, decentralized staff. Following an audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Department would be formulating concrete proposals to strengthen management capacity and conducting a department-wide review of its business processes.

16. To enhance its culture of accountability, the Department had increased its capacity for early identification of conduct issues. Conduct and discipline teams were in place at Headquarters and in eight missions, and additional teams were being established. Guidelines on how to handle cases of misconduct had been circulated in the field, and a system for tracking and investigating cases was in place at Headquarters. Further guidelines and standards on conduct were being developed, and the draft model memorandum of understanding on troop provision was being revised. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations would meet in resumed session again in order to consider the issue of sexual exploitation.

17. Procurement reform had advanced through streamlining and better oversight of procurement systems. A panel to review requirements and a dedicated office to advise missions on field procurement had been established and specialized training for procurement officers had been developed. Increased regional pooling in logistics and greater use of outsourcing had boosted efficiency. The Department's information management approach had been reviewed and, once implemented, a new Organization-wide system would facilitate comprehensive data management and verification.

18. The Department's second strategic priority was to run itself out of business. Conditions for sustainable

withdrawal had to be enhanced in order for the Department to meet new demands. Reinforced political engagement from international and national actors was often the quickest route to a sustainable exit. In order to lower its caseloads and ensure lasting stability after withdrawal, the Department needed to increase its focus on its core business and to improve the degree and quality of its support for the establishment of sustainable national security institutions and processes.

19. Security sector reform would not succeed if it were not part of an overall national security strategy encompassing early reconstruction, effective governance, human rights and sustainability. The participation of Member States, multilateral actors and international financial institutions would be vital to holistic and sustainable security sector reform. Still, unless the Department improved the rate and quality of its contribution to such wider reform, peacekeeping operations would either be protracted or, worse still, have to be reinstated.

20. Reducing the number of peacekeeping operations also meant enhancing partnerships. Effective partnerships complemented the Department's efforts by contributing components, such as economic regeneration and long-term reintegration, that were essential to post-conflict peacebuilding and for which the Department had no capacity. While still new and limited by operational regulations, joint programming with entities of the United Nations system was a more efficient way to use collective resources. The Department needed to revise regulations that impeded practical cooperation and to provide more incentives to United Nations partners to increase their coordinated programmes. The inter-agency review of the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP) improved identification of joint programming opportunities and the coherence of the Department's approach. Guidelines and training materials were being developed in order to carry out the revised IMPP policy.

21. In a shift of perspective, peacekeeping was seen as a core United Nations activity, reflected in collective discussions and operational developments in the field. Member States had provided substantial initiative for the new approach. Yet the greatest impetus for a more effective and active Department of Peacekeeping Operations was the demand of peoples worldwide for the right to live in basic security and dignity. Peace Operations 2010 was the road map to follow to achieve the Department's objectives for, while some progress had been made, much remained to be done. He hoped the Committee would continue to support his broad strategic vision for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 14th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 20 October 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Andersson (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Sweden)

Contents

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

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06-58099 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Acharya (Nepal), Mr. Andersson (Sweden), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Gidor** (Israel) said that Israeli officers had participated in peacekeeping courses organized by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for the first time in 2006. His Government was interested in contributing some of its military experience and technological proficiency in order to assist peacekeeping operations. It had accumulated unparalleled expertise in the areas of military observers, police training and forensic science and hoped to expand its contribution to the Department's operations.

2. **Ms. El Alaoui** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that peacekeeping operations must observe the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in agreements concluded at ministerial conferences. Peacekeeping operations should show respect for the principles of sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity of States and non-intervention in matters that were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States. They should be provided with political support, adequate human, financial and logistical resources and clearly defined and achievable mandates. Peacekeeping operations should not be used as a substitute for addressing the root causes of a conflict and it was important to ensure that there was a smooth transition to lasting peace, security and development after the cessation of peacekeeping operations.

3. The primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rested with the United Nations and regional arrangements should function in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. However, regional arrangements made an important contribution to regional peace and security. The efforts undertaken by the African Union and other subregional organizations required continuous and consistent support. In that connection, the World Summit had called for the implementation of a 10-year plan for capacity-building with the African Union. The high number of casualties of peacekeepers in the field remained a serious cause for concern and it was necessary to modernize peacekeeping capabilities and to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers by enhancing technology and information and communications capacities in the field.

4. As far as conduct and disciplinary issues were concerned, member States of the Non-Aligned Movement supported a policy of zero tolerance and were committed to preserving the image, credibility and integrity of the United Nations. There was a need to improve the Organization's ability to manage peacekeeping operations effectively and efficiently and to achieve the key objectives outlined in the reform agenda. Member States should be engaged in that reform process. Furthermore, a wide range of peacebuilding activities were needed to support the political process and the Peacebuilding Commission should play a decisive role in bringing greater political awareness and support to long-term peacebuilding. Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement provided more than 80 per cent of peacekeeping personnel in the field and were committed to increasing their contribution. However, there was a need for equal treatment of all troop-contributing countries, which should be engaged early and fully in all aspects and stages of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Secretariat should continue its efforts to address the current imbalance of geographical representation at Headquarters and in the field of unrepresented and underrepresented troop-contributing countries. Member States of the Movement were insufficiently represented at the professional level and it was necessary to identify qualified candidates for senior mission posts from major troop-contributing countries. In connection with the proposal to recruit civilian cadre personnel, it was important to maintain a balanced and fair geographical representation.

5. **Mr. Hassan** (Jordan) said that, in view of the surge in peacekeeping, it was important to continue to advance the reform agenda with a view to enhancing and improving the capacity to manage peacekeeping operations and to achieve optimal transition to peacebuilding. A rule of law component and a holistic approach to security sector reform should be employed at an early stage of peacekeeping. His Government supported the proposal to overhaul the way in which the Department of Peacekeeping Operations staffed peacekeeping operations and the establishment of a substantial capacity of civilian peacekeepers. However,

it was important to deliberate further on the nature of civilian participation in peacekeeping. Information and communication technology capacities needed to be substantially improved and technical monitoring and surveillance could be used to improve security in those areas that were too volatile for monitoring from the ground. In connection with allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations, his Government looked forward to the revised model memorandum of understanding, the national investigations officers concept and the comprehensive strategy on victims. Another area of concern was the organization of joint meetings between members of the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. Those meetings had been established with the purpose of promoting a frank discussion and exchange of views but had primarily focused on briefings by the Department. All Member States must pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions, bearing in mind the special responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council, as indicated in General Assembly resolution 1874 (S-IV).

6. **Mr. Maqungo** (South Africa) said that peacekeeping operations should be conducted in a manner that respected the principles of sovereign equality, political independence, territorial integrity of all States and non-intervention in matters that were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the affected States. While the maintenance of international peace and security rested with the United Nations, regional organizations such as the African Union had made important contributions. He welcomed the assistance that the United Nations had provided in developing the peacekeeping capabilities of the African Union but noted that it was essential to allocate adequate resources to ensure that peacekeepers had the necessary support to achieve their mandate. The Department should continue its engagement with Member States to facilitate the implementation of the reform programme. However, it was untenable that there were only 12 military planners for a deployed force of approximately 100,000 troops in several missions. In addition to strengthening the military capacities, it was necessary to improve regional representation at higher management levels. The rapid response capacity was still a major factor inhibiting peacekeeping operations and Member States should examine the concept in the context of the differing capabilities of States. The Special Committee had recognized the importance of comprehensive strategies and his Government welcomed the establishment of civilian police components.

7. Peacekeepers continued to work in dangerous situations, a fact underscored by the 72 fatalities suffered in 2006. He called on all parties to refrain from engaging in acts likely to endanger the lives of peacekeeping personnel and welcomed the improved measures for the sharing of information between troop-contributing countries and field commanders. In connection with allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, it was important to focus on prevention because that kind of behaviour undermined confidence in the United Nations. His Government had developed training programmes to shape the attitudes of peacekeeping personnel and all allegations of sexual exploitation were investigated in a timely manner. Commensurate disciplinary measures were taken against those found guilty. His Government welcomed the efforts to establish universal norms to ensure the accountability of United Nations staff and experts on mission and the report of the first Group of Legal Experts appointed by the Secretary-General contained in document A/60/980. In relation to criminal acts by peacekeepers, the Department should continue with its efforts to implement a prevention aspect of its comprehensive strategy. Furthermore, it was important to bridge the divide between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Commission should ensure the implementation of an integrated approach that provided for conflict prevention and management and developed the capacity of social institutions.

8. **Mr. Akram** (Pakistan) said that the continuing surge in demand for peacekeeping was a vote of confidence, trust and faith in the United Nations. The nature and scope of peacekeeping had evolved progressively and there was a growing requirement for professional and well-equipped peacekeepers. Complex missions required better and effective management, organization, planning, deployment and logistics. It was necessary to ensure the political commitment of Member States to peacekeeping and specific operations and to ensure that missions were provided with adequate and timely resources. The fact that some missions lacked adequate resources affected their effectiveness and jeopardized the safety and security of peacekeepers. Furthermore, the United Nations should continue its reform programme at Headquarters and in the field and implement a comprehensive approach to

conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The United Nations was often the only credible interlocutor and all Member States should extend sustained political support to that role. However, such support should evoke non-discriminatory and equal treatment from the Secretariat.

9. Pakistan supported reform efforts for better management of peacekeeping activities, including all actors, in particular troop-contributing countries. The lack of representation of troop-contributing countries at senior leadership levels should be addressed. It was encouraging that partnerships had grown through comprehensive approaches, including integrated missions. The Peacebuilding Commission was one such approach that offered hope for effective peacekeeping strategies. Still, regional partnerships, in particular with the African Union, should be enhanced. The United Nations should focus its efforts on, and use its peacekeeping capacity to, enhance its role in conflict prevention and resolution.

10. A civilian peacekeeping cadre with equitable geographical representation should be established in order to ensure adequate capacity for all aspects of peacekeeping operations. It was also important to agree on standards, policies and strategies for the zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

11. As a leading troop contributor over the past few years, Pakistan was concerned that United Nations deployment of peacekeeping operations without the support of national governments could erode universal support for United Nations peacekeepers. The Committee needed to discuss in detail, with the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, the deployment of peacekeepers, the concept of a robust mandate and the use of force.

12. **Mr. Hunger** (Switzerland) said that sustainable peace could not be achieved by military means alone; therefore it was crucial to maintain a strong link between the operational and political aspects of missions. While his delegation welcomed improvements in the working methods of the Committee and the increased number of meetings, it was concerned about efficiency and encouraged the Committee to set priorities and to allow time for meeting preparation.

13. Switzerland supported the five priority reform areas of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and welcomed efforts to compile guidelines on best practices. It was also important to develop standardized training and behaviour modules as clear guidelines were critical to the success of operations. The Department and troop-contributing countries should continue their efforts to implement training measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by civilian and military peacekeeping personnel.

14. It was vital to complete the recruiting process for a standing police capacity and to ensure that it would include highly qualified and reliable personnel. Rapidly deployable capacities needed to be enhanced for successful peacekeeping operations, and they could be further enhanced by improving integrated planning so all strategic partners could cooperate in a transparent and constructive manner. He called on the Committee to address integrated missions and partnerships through enhancing its cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission. The Department should also enhance cooperation with the Peacebuilding Support Office.

15. **Mr. Kazykhanov** (Kazakhstan) said that the increased demand for and complexity of missions made rapidly deployable standby capacity and police contingents necessary. In order to mobilize resources and establish a standing police capacity and strategic reserve force, the Department, along with the Peacebuilding Commission, should enhance partnerships with regional and other intergovernmental organizations. Kazakhstan was working to enhance cooperation among Member States, United Nations agencies and regional organizations.

16. Peacekeeping operations should be conducted according to the United Nations Charter and other basic peacekeeping standards, including the consent of parties involved and the non-use of force, except in self-defence. He welcomed action taken to correct the misconduct and abuses by peacekeeping personnel on field missions and reiterated his Government's commitment to its peacekeeping obligations and its readiness to provide peacekeeping personnel and equipment.

17. **Ms. Juul** (Norway) said that, while the surge in the Department's missions was an expression of renewed confidence in United Nations-led peacekeeping, it put an unprecedented strain on the Secretariat's and Member States' financial and human resources. Member States had to ensure that the

Organization successfully managed that surge in peacekeeping operations.

18. The rapid deployment of the maritime task force of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) demonstrated not only the wide spectrum of tasks faced by the United Nations but also renewed commitment of European nations and represented an opportunity to re-engage Western nations in United Nations-led peacekeeping. UNIFIL was Norway's first step towards its increased commitment to peacekeeping; it planned to focus on Darfur as its second step. Reform as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/640) was important in strengthening the renewed commitment.

19. The current structure of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations did not reflect the critical role played by its military component, especially during the initial phase of most operations. Addressing that problem would be crucial to enhancing the stability and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. The system needed to be more flexible, with the force commander being given greater authority over operational decisions. Joint operations centres and joint mission analysis centres were important and should be established. Norway welcomed the integrated mission approach and supported the development of integrated United Nations peace operations.

20. Norway considered it a priority to establish partnerships with other organizations and firmly supported enhanced cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It also supported efforts to enhance cooperation with the African Union. Her country hoped to broaden its cooperation with the African Union by strengthening its embassy in Addis Ababa and was already engaged in a dialogue with AU on possible support for the development of the civilian dimension of the African standby force.

21. She welcomed the creation of a standing police capacity and noted that a senior police adviser would join her country's mission in New York in order to increase its capacity to follow up on civilian aspects of security sector reform. However, she was concerned by the relatively low number of women in the Department's senior management positions; in that regard, it was important to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. Finally, she reiterated Norway's support for continuing efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel and efforts to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping.

22. **Ms. Ali** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that, given the growth in demand for peacekeeping operations, the Department must adapt its strategies and enhance its capacity to respond to realities on the ground. In order to preserve the reputation of dedicated peacekeepers, the Rio Group fully supported the policy of zero tolerance of sexual abuse and exploitation. In that regard, the capacity of the Office of Internal Oversight Services should be strengthened to guarantee justice for all parties concerned.

23. The Rio Group welcomed the progress achieved on the reform front, in developing peacekeeping principles and policies and welcomed the efforts that had been made to enhance cooperation between the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries. It was also necessary to continue the Department's interactive dialogue and briefings, which would eventually enhance the quality of peacekeeping operations. Partnerships with regional and subregional organizations and agencies should be enhanced to adapt to the changing nature of conflict. In that regard, she commended efforts to enhance African peacekeeping capacities. Collaboration with such regional and subregional organizations could promote information sharing and early warning capabilities. Finally, while recruitment of civilian personnel continued to be difficult, the Rio Group welcomed measures by the Department and the Office of Human Resources Management to make the process more effective. It also encouraged efforts to improve training standards for peacekeeping personnel.

24. The Rio Group commended the role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in consolidating peace and constitutional order, establishing institutions of governance and supporting long-term development. The success of such efforts to guarantee stability and political reconciliation required enhanced human and financial resources. It was therefore critical to provide sufficient funding for the Department.

25. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) observed that the greatly expanded role of peacekeeping missions had effectively blurred the distinction between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The two processes

now essentially overlapped and complemented each other, for it had been seen that fully half of the countries emerging from war had lapsed back into violence within five years. Since the 1980's Bangladesh had contributed almost 60,000 peacekeepers to almost 40 operations in almost 30 countries. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations had done well to take an integrated approach to the safety and security of peacekeepers, a matter of overriding importance. Bangladesh itself had lost 80 of its own peacekeepers in the line of duty.

26. Although the United Nations was steadily improving its ability to respond to the unprecedented surge in and the demand for peacekeeping operations, its capacity was being sorely tested. The Peacebuilding Commission, which would gradually institutionalize the process of peacebuilding, should concentrate on marshalling those in a critical position to assist national authorities in immediate recovery efforts in order to pave the way for longer-term construction. The Peacebuilding Support Office, as both the Commission's informed secretariat and its link to the Secretary-General, would have a critical role. Throughout the peacebuilding process, it would be important to create peace constituencies comprising teachers, lawyers and religious leaders, who could act as mid-level links between the grass-roots and the elite levels. The establishment of a partnership among all the stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and civil society, would also be crucial.

27. Post-conflict societies must be in charge of their own destiny, relying on their own intellectual resources, combined with external material support. Only home-grown ideas — such as microcredit in Bangladesh, which had recently received such recognition — would transform the societal landscape and put nations on the path to development.

28. It was, however, disappointing to see the hard-earned reputation and accomplishment of peacekeeping operations tainted by the alleged sexual abuse by some United Nations peacekeepers and by the alleged procurement corruption in the field and at Headquarters. Public trust could simply not be allowed to be thus eroded; such improprieties had to be dealt with severely.

29. The Department was to be commended for improving its recruitment and planning functions, for developing a best practices section and for keeping strategic deployment stocks in readiness. The Department's Integrated Training Service, bringing together military, police and civilian trainers at Headquarters and in the field, would definitely augment its capacity in that regard. The success of a peacekeeping mission hinged on a well-coordinated partnership between the Security Council, troop contributors and the Department, with sustained consultation at every phase.

30. The challenge of the day was to dovetail peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding into a seamless progression of complementary activities at an essentially local level, though buttressed by external support.

31. **Mr. Zaemsky** (Russian Federation) commended the fact that the capacity of Member States, the Secretariat and the entire United Nations system to plan and conduct peacekeeping operations had been strengthened, without compromising the Charter of the United Nations or international law. The United Nations had to deal with an increasing demand for peacekeeping forces and, at the same time, to tackle the long-overdue reform of peacekeeping operations. Some reforms had already borne fruit, such as the international integrated planning of peacekeeping operations at every stage, the improvement of military expertise for decisions on conflict prevention and settlement and the promotion of closer cooperation with regional organizations.

32. Unfortunately, the Organization had not taken full advantage of some of its unique assets, particularly the Military Staff Committee, which was underused. In that connection, he drew attention to the strategic military cells, which had been established on the initiative of the Secretariat. It was too soon to reach any conclusion as to whether the experiment would be successful, but it should not have been undertaken without prior consultation with all the Member States concerned, not least in order to avoid undermining the existing management system of peacekeeping missions.

33. Peacekeeping personnel must maintain the highest standards of conduct. Acts of sexual exploitation or abuse undermined confidence in the United Nations and must be punished. For all its importance, however, the issue should not overshadow other issues facing the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, such as the need to ensure

the security of peacekeeping personnel — both national contingents and international staff — or the inappropriate use of military observers on United Nations missions. There had been cases in which military observers had been requested to engage in military intelligence. The impartiality of military observers should not be called into question. In that connection, he emphasized the importance of the role played by the Special Committee in reviewing all issues relating to United Nations peacekeeping, since its recommendations determined the future direction of peacekeeping policy. It was therefore regrettable that the 2006 substantive session of the Special Committee had failed to complete its programme of work. The reason seemed to be that delegations continued to submit new proposals for inclusion in the draft report until the very last moment. The session should be better organized, although the Special Committee's work should not be curtailed in any way, either by abandoning the general debate or by sidelining the work on the draft report.

34. Peacekeeping had figured largely in the deliberations of the Group of Eight Summit in St. Petersburg. The report by the Group of Eight and other key donors on strengthening African peacekeeping capacity had been submitted to the Group's Ministers for Foreign Affairs. The Summit had also adopted a statement on cooperation and future action on stabilization and reconstruction, which contained a number of measures that members could undertake to increase their own response capabilities. In that connection, his delegation commended the Global Peace Operations Initiative adopted by the United States of America, which would consolidate the international community's efforts to maintain international peace and security.

35. The Russian Federation had adopted a number of measures to build up global peacekeeping capacity and, in particular, to train military observers and civil police from African countries. A total of 80 trainee African peacekeepers were to be trained every year until 2010 at the Russian National Advanced Training Institute for Interior Ministry Personnel. The Ministry would also be sending experts to peacekeeping training centres in Accra, Ghana, and Vicenza, Italy. It would also be participating in the work of the Southern African Development Community Subregional Peacekeeping Training Centre in Harare. The Ministry of Defence was considering the possibility of training up to 15 African peacekeepers a year in the Russian Armed Forces Peacekeeping Training Centre in Solnechnogorsk.

36. **Mr. Sardenburg** (Brazil) observed that the surge in peacekeeping operations since 2003 had posed huge organizational, logistical and financial challenges. To meet the challenges, the Secretariat must work more closely with the troop-contributing countries, 90 per cent of them — like Brazil — developing countries, and should attend particularly to their views and requests, since their service entitled them to a say on the structure of peacekeeping missions.

37. The security of troops, police and civilians working in often uncertain areas should be at the top of the agenda. Although the Department of Safety and Security and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had made laudable efforts in that regard, it was unfortunate that the Secretary-General's recommendations in that regard had been ignored in setting up the forthcoming mission to Timor-Leste.

38. It was also important to ensure the efficient, transparent reimbursement of troop-contributing countries, and to achieve better geographical and gender balance in the staff in charge of peacekeeping at Headquarters and overseas. Peacekeeping operations should have an adequate structure and a unified command and control, their mandate should be clear both to the peacekeepers themselves and to the Governments and populations involved, and they should be fully financed from the peacekeeping budget. The absence of any of those factors exposed the peacekeepers and the population to a fragile peace, as did hasty, ill-advised and ultimately costly decisions to withdraw or reduce peacekeeping missions in order to save money. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had made a useful proposal for institutionalizing ways of dealing with sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers so as to guarantee due process of law to the victims, the witnesses and the accused.

39. Cooperation with regional bodies — which had proved crucial in Haiti, West Africa and the Sudan — was another area that deserved full consideration, as did the establishment of the integrated framework for action discussed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/60/640). It was similarly important to reinforce the staff and funding of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to meet the needs of missions, and to

expand its cooperation with other departments in order to make the most of its resources.

40. Peacekeeping operations must commit themselves more firmly to the longer-term stability and development of the countries concerned, a task to which currently few resources were devoted. Lasting peace could not be achieved without social justice, development, the eradication of poverty and the creation of employment opportunities. Member States should ensure that the new mentality was incorporated in mission mandates and in administrative and budgetary arrangements, at least in areas such as disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and capacity-building.

41. Brazil, a troop contributor from the start, was currently involved in two special political missions and in eight operations, chief of which was MINUSTAH, where it was committed to the long-term stability and development of a fellow Latin American country. That mission had succeeded in improving the situation in the country, and now the dividends of stability must be made evident to the population in the form of social development and economic growth.

42. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that peacekeeping operations were tools of collective security capable of averting dangers and had proven their effectiveness in recent years despite their increased complexity. In his report, the Secretary-General observed that the budget for peacekeeping operations in the past year had climbed to $5 billion, while the total regular budget of the United Nations was only $3.8 billion. That observation summed up the political ramifications of peacekeeping. The Organization had been established to prevent wars and peacefully resolve conflicts; its original purpose was prevention and not cure — the opposite of what was the case today.

43. The first United Nations peacekeeping operation had been launched over 50 years ago in the Middle East and was still undertaking its functions capably and effectively. His country valued the sacrifices that had been made by peacekeepers throughout the world and, in particular, in the Middle East. The latest such sacrifices had been the deaths of four observers serving with UNIFIL at the hands of Israel.

44. It was important to abide by the principles and main guidelines of peacekeeping operations, rapid deployment, recruitment and the reimbursement of arrears to troop-contributing countries. Peacekeeping operations must observe the principles enshrined in the Charter, including respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of all States. Furthermore, their mandates should be viable and well defined. In keeping with the fundamental principles of General Assembly resolution 1874 (S-IV) entitled "General principles to serve as guidelines for the sharing of the costs of future peace-keeping operations involving heavy expenditures", the financing of peacekeeping operations was the responsibility of the aggressor or the occupying Power.

45. Security measures at the headquarters of United Nations missions should also be strengthened in order to ensure the safety and security of the personnel who dedicated their lives to the goal of peace in the world. In addition, a tripartite partnership should be established between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries for the planning, organization and deployment of peacekeeping operations. His Government had recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations regarding its contributions to the standby arrangements system for peacekeeping operations.

46. **Ms. Lintonen** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and, in addition, Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union was intensifying its involvement with United Nations peacekeeping operations under the European Security Strategy. It currently contributed nearly 40 per cent of the peacekeeping budget and soon would have more than 10,000 peacekeepers throughout the world.

47. As more Secretariat and peacekeeping staff were required, the cost of peacekeeping had risen rapidly. Adequacy of forces, of course, was not measured in numbers but rather in terms of professionalism, quality, equipment, doctrine and especially an effective command-and-control structure.

48. The European Union welcomed the increasing involvement of regional organizations in solving regional conflicts, as long as they acted according to

United Nations guidelines with Security Council support and respected the rule of law and human rights.

49. The European Union also planned to help strengthen the Organization's excellent operational peacekeeping capacity. Department of Peacekeeping Operations functions should be further streamlined, and more consideration given to the speedy deployment of peacekeeping troops and to lessons learned policies in order to improve performance.

50. The report of the Secretary-General (A/60/640 and Add.1) had set out the Department's reform agenda for the next five years, which the European Union endorsed; and had included an interesting proposal to establish a cadre of 2,500 career civilian positions in peace operations, which should improve their effective management. The European Union was also ready to continue exploring the different options for enhanced rapidly deployable capacities, especially the use of regional capacities in that connection, the expansion of a standing police capacity and the integrated mission planning process.

51. The doctrine of peacekeeping had evolved considerably in recent years, now incorporating diverse fields such as conflict prevention, mediation, respect for human rights, the rule of law, gender equality and humanitarian assistance, as well as strategic oversight of post-conflict reconstruction and long-term development. The European Union could offer a unique range of long-term and short-term instruments of conflict management and prevention, with emphasis on their targeted application to potential conflicts and the coordination of military and civilian elements. One of the keys to optimizing the Organization's crisis management tools would be the full-scale application of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

52. The security sector reform addressed in the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission was of paramount importance in conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and democratization, not to mention sustainable development. The Commission would undoubtedly encourage concerted peacekeeping action, and the European Union intended to work closely with it and its Support Office on the integrated planning system. The 2003 Joint Declaration on United Nations-European Union Cooperation in Crisis Management had allowed the European Union to share the peacekeeping burden by offering military assets or civilian response teams for deployment.

53. The challenging situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained a high priority for the European Union, which earlier in the year had helped secure the election process there by launching its own operation under Security Council resolution 1671 (2006) in close cooperation with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), thus increasing the country's trust in the impartiality of both Organizations. Interested in deepening its partnership also with the African Union, the European Union supported the recommendation in the 2005 World Summit Outcome for a 10-year plan for capacity-building with the African Union. The European Union's quick action to ensure the deployment of reinforcements for UNIFIL under Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) was a sign of its high commitment. The establishment of a strategic military cell for UNIFIL within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was a significant step that could eventually be duplicated in other missions.

54. The European Union was gravely concerned about the precarious security environment prevailing in many missions. It called upon Member States to give priority, as did the Secretariat, to enhancing the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel in the field, and condemned in the strongest terms their killing in several missions. The primary responsibility for security lay with the host governments, which should respect their obligations under the Geneva Convention and hold accountable those responsible for violent acts against peacekeeping personnel or their premises. In addition, any peacekeepers guilty of gender-based violence or crimes against humanity should not be allowed to operate with impunity: such misconduct, so detrimental to the relations of peacekeeping personnel with the population of host countries, was unacceptable. While admittedly it was not easy to incorporate the issue of human rights in a peacekeeping situation, the European Union encouraged the use of peacekeeping capacity to protect populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

55. **Mr. Meechoo-Arrth** (Thailand) observed that the Department had done extremely well in managing the complex challenges of conducting 18 peace missions around the globe within the last 12 months. It was

urgent for peacekeepers to ensure the safety of civilians in the conflict areas: immediate action being one of the best ways to lower civilian casualties and stop a conflict from escalating, mission readiness was thus basic

56. His delegation was pleased to note that the Secretary-General in his report (A/60/640) had endorsed the need for a comprehensive review of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System. At the same time, there should be greater partnership in meeting the urgent funding and readiness needs of peacekeeping operations, and more of the developed countries should assist the developing countries that had served as the backbone of United Nations peacekeeping for decades.

57. The security of peacekeepers on the ground was another issue of particular concern. Increased attacks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Lebanon had made it a priority and the Department should have the ability to gather tactical information regarding new threats and dangers to their personnel in order to prevent them.

58. It was regrettable that an issue like sexual exploitation and abuse required attention. The abuse of trust by peacekeepers themselves could not be allowed to go on unchecked, and any misconduct should be dealt with seriously. His Government intended to take a greater part in peacekeeping operations, especially in Africa, where it was planning to increase its troops in the field considerably.

59. **Mr. Muburi-Muita** (Kenya) said that his delegation spared no efforts in helping to find solutions to conflict situations throughout the world. It participated in mediation activities in the African region and contributed peacekeeping troops to several United Nations missions. Kenya would be hosting the International Conference on the Great Lakes region in December 2006. His delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's move to set up partnerships that would help share the burden of peace operations. The African Union had demonstrated the will to take responsibility for its own security. Kenya's contribution was to host the headquarters of the Eastern African Standby Brigade and to establish the Kenya Peace Support Training Centre. As for the recent agreement between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the African Union's Peace Support Operations Division to build peacekeeping capacity, the support provided should extend beyond technical advice and include logistical back-up. Indeed, he proposed that the United Nations should urgently explore the possibility that the African Union might use stock from the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy whenever there was a need for quick deployment prior to intervention by the United Nations.

60. As well as participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions, Kenyan troops had also been involved in humanitarian demining activities. Following the establishment in Kenya of the International Mine Action Training Centre, Kenyan combat engineers were certified to International Mine Action Standard and were currently deployed with the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan. His delegation was, however, concerned that, although Kenyan troops carried out the most critical part of demining activities, they were paid less than contracted civilian firms.

61. Although his delegation recognized that some positive efforts had been made to improve recruitment to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, there was an urgent need to redress the imbalance in the geographical representation of Member States in the Department. The Secretary-General should take immediate measures to that end.

62. Personnel engaged in United Nations peacekeeping operations must conduct themselves in a manner that preserved the image, credibility, impartiality and integrity of the United Nations. Any misconduct or even any perception of impropriety had a detrimental effect on relations with the local population. His delegation therefore welcomed the development of a mechanism to standardize acceptable norms of conduct. The task of investigating and trying misconduct or criminal acts should, however, be left to the Member State of the accused person, with the United Nations playing a supervisory role and providing the necessary administrative and logistical support. Commanders on the ground should continue to enjoy freedom of action within their mandates and in strict compliance with the United Nations code of conduct.

63. **Mr. Dicko** (Mali) said that, true to its traditional values, Mali had always contributed troops to peacekeeping operations, including officers of the Gendarmerie Nationale, observers and police officers,

beginning with the peacekeeping operations in the Congo in 1960, and including missions such as the United Nations Mission in Liberia between 2003 and 2004; the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, 1997-1998; and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic, 1997-1998. Mali had also participated in a number of peacekeeping operations under the banner of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

64. The terms and conditions for the participation of Malian soldiers and security forces in peace operations were set out in Decree No. 97-077/P-RM of 12 February 1997. Mali organized training courses for peacekeepers at the Boubacar Sada Sy Centre in Koulikoro, which were also attended by trainees from other west African countries. In addition, the Documentation Centre for Peacekeeping Operations had been established in July 2004 with the mandate of following the activities of Malian troops, publicizing information on them and helping to train new members of the missions.

65. The capacities of peacekeeping forces should be strengthened, in his delegation's view, by putting a greater emphasis on crisis management techniques, knowledge of the receiving country and, from the other side, knowledge of the United Nations and its principles. Such an approach would make for greater effectiveness.

66. **Mr. Morneau** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, which, together with Canada, made up the CANZ group of countries, expressed concern at the lack resources available to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations but welcomed the reforms carried out by the Department to improve its ability to support peace operations over the next decade. In view of the steady increase in the number and size of peace operations, it should consider requesting increased resources for the Military and Police Divisions resources in future budgets. Both Divisions were understaffed and lacked the resources to plan new operations on a sustained basis. The Secretariat should also explore the possibility of upgrading the status of military and police advisers to the level of Assistant Secretary-General, thus reflecting the importance of military and police advice in complex peace operations. The CANZ countries offered to help the Department with doctrine development and looked forward to learning more about the anticipated working relationship between the newly established Peacebuilding Commission and the relevant departments at Headquarters and in the field.

67. With regard to safety and security, excellent work was being done on the latter, but previously promised work in the safety dimension of the Department of Safety and Security should be urgently undertaken. In that connection, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should improve the capability of mission headquarters to provide mission members with risk assessments.

68. CANZ urged the General Assembly to consider a recommendation by a working group of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, contained in document A/60/696, that the support arrangements for staff officers in the field should be revised, thus eliminating the discriminatory remuneration treatment of staff officers relative to military observers, police and international staff members.

69. During the recent conflict in Lebanon, the Khiam patrol base had been destroyed by Israeli aerial bombardment which had killed four United Nations military observers. Under the current policy of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the States of which the four had been nationals had been denied the opportunity to have a representative on the United Nations board of inquiry investigating the incident, nor had a national board of inquiry been given the opportunity to interview United Nations staff. Following further requests by the countries concerned, the Department had, on an exceptional basis, provided an almost complete copy of its board of inquiry report, which would help the four States concerned complete their own inquiries. The current policy should be reviewed both by the Department itself and by the Special Committee at its substantive session in February and March 2007.

70. Formed police units had become an important element of United Nations integrated missions. There was, however, an urgent need to finalize the development of a policy and standards for such units in order to ensure clear command and control arrangements and reduce the potential duplication of responsibilities within missions.

71. CANZ welcomed the range of strategic initiatives aimed at building institutional police capacity in post-conflict environments. The Police Division's engagement with Member States in the development of

those initiatives had proved successful and should continue.

72. It was to be hoped that the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which had been unable to complete its report in June 2006, would do so in December. The United Nations must enforce a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by all its personnel in mission areas.

73. CANZ urged the Secretariat to ensure that the policy paper and the fully developed reinforcement needs assessment on the concept of enhanced rapidly deployable capacities were provided to members of the Special Committee for review well before its next meeting. It should, moreover, ensure that the Police Division was involved in the further development of the concept. Options for a peace operations strategic analytical capability at Headquarters should be examined for the benefit of the needs assessment. The Secretariat rightly recognized the need for the further development of policy and guidelines for joint operations centres and joint mission analysis centres. In that connection, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should address the issue of intelligence. When dealing with complex and multidimensional missions, the United Nations must have full access to intelligence collection and analysis. A review should be undertaken to that end by the Department, with the cooperation of the Special Committee.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

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Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

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06-58213 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*) (A/60/19 and Add.1 and A/60/980)

1. **Mr. Basu** (India) said that in view of recent increases in United Nations peacekeeping activity, the ability of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to raise and deploy large peacekeeping components at short notice was commendable, but there was also a tendency to create new parallel instruments without in-depth planning. Of particular concern to India was the safety and security of uniformed and civilian personnel, and in that regard his delegation welcomed the Under-Secretary-General's focus on reform, resources, training, modernization and accountability.

2. Stressing the importance of sharing mission information with troop-contributing countries and field commanders, he called on the bureaucracy at Headquarters to actively engage field missions and respond positively to their problems. Ensuring equitable geographical representation and transparency in recruitment were important considerations in the creation of a civilian cadre for DPKO, as was the improvement of communication technologies and information technology capacities so as to enhance the safety and security of field personnel.

3. India supported consultations among troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat. Briefings for troop-contributing countries were being held with increasing frequency, but were still occurring too close to the renewal of mission mandates, leaving insufficient time for meaningful discussions. Troop-contributing countries needed to be involved early and fully in all aspects and stages of mission planning.

4. India also supported efforts to further deepen the Organization's relationship with the African Union. Nevertheless, regional arrangements should accord with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations; the real challenge for the Organization lay in finding ways to strengthen peacekeeping without regionalizing it.

5. While agreeing that peacekeeping elements should be incorporated into new multidisciplinary peacekeeping operations from the outset to ensure a seamless transition, he cautioned against the tendency to confuse peacekeeping with peacebuilding; the latter was best left to the agencies, funds and commissions of the United Nations system and must be locally owned. In that regard, his delegation supported institutional cooperation and coordination between DPKO and the Peacebuilding Commission, including the Peacebuilding Support Office.

6. Sexual exploitation and abuse were totally unacceptable forms of behaviour; his delegation fully supported the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy and noted the work done by DPKO on raising the awareness of those with managerial and command responsibilities as well as on establishing conduct, training and investigation standards. It also welcomed the progress made towards the establishment of standing police capacity, and emphasized that recruitment should be done in a transparent manner with due consideration of professionalism, geographical balance and the contributions of troop-contributing countries.

7. In conclusion, he said that India desired to make peacekeeping into an even more effective tool for the maintenance of international peace and security.

8. **Mr. Ali** (Sudan) said that it was incumbent on DPKO to carry out its missions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and within clearly defined mandates. Those mandates should be based on such principles as consent of the governments in question for peacekeeping, respect for the sovereignty and political independence of States, respect for their territorial integrity and non-interference in their internal affairs.

9. In order to assure the success of peacekeeping missions, DPKO must guarantee the security of peacekeepers and monitor their behaviour in order to avoid the recurrence of the sexual abuse that had occurred on some missions. Financial management should be strengthened in order to assure Member States that funds were being used responsibly. Building lasting peace also depended on true cooperation with civil society organizations and the private sector.

10. Despite decades of war, Sudan had cooperated closely with the Organization in a joint quest for peace. That quest had culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 9 January 2005 and had led to the creation of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). The Darfur Peace Agreement was also being

implemented and the Government of Sudan was doing its utmost to convince armed movements that had rejected that Agreement to join the peace process.

11. United Nations peacekeeping operations should work effectively and harmoniously with regional organizations. Such organizations had a better understanding of the conflicts in question owing to their cultural and social ties with the affected areas as well as their geographical proximity. Thus it was imperative to strengthen the capacities of regional organizations by providing them with the necessary resources and training. In that regard, he commended the support that DPKO provided the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS).

12. He stressed that DPKO should always have a time frame for the accomplishment of its duties and a clear exit strategy for its missions and should make national actors the basis for the continuation of peacebuilding and development efforts.

13. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) emphasized the importance of maintaining the governing principles of the United Nations when organizing a peacekeeping mission. Peacekeeping forces should be constituted on the basis of their ability to contribute to the goals of the mission, and such missions required the prior approval of all concerned parties. He urged the Security Council to exercise its authority with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security and to call for an immediate ceasefire in order to avoid humanitarian tragedies such as that which had recently occurred in Lebanon.

14. His delegation wished to re-emphasize the importance of a number of factors in the implementation of peacekeeping operations. First was the need to ensure the security and safety of peacekeeping troops and United Nations personnel working in the field; in the light of the recent deaths of UNIFIL troops in Lebanon, DPKO should establish mechanisms to guarantee troop safety and recognize criminal and material responsibility of States that bombarded United Nations posts. Second was the need for enhanced consultation among the Security Council, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the troop-contributing countries when new peacekeeping missions were approved or existing mandates reviewed; in that regard, he requested clarification of the costs and benefits of the Department's proposal to involve nearly 20,000 civilian personnel in peacekeeping activities, especially in view of existing budgetary limitations. Third was the need to affirm the vital relationship between peacebuilding efforts and development activities in conflict areas, in order to provide the appropriate conditions for Governments to emerge from conflicts and to prevent conflicts from recurring. Fourth was the need to confront any failures by peacekeeping personnel in the fulfilment of their duties by enforcing accountability; such enforcement must be done transparently by the Secretariat and field commanders in consultation with the States concerned.

15. Egypt welcomed the consolidation of regional peacekeeping efforts in Africa, and emphasized the necessity of achieving that consolidation in a framework of agreement, coordination and full cooperation among the United Nations, regional organizations and concerned States. Egypt supported the strengthening of the role of the African Union in Sudan, and called for the Organization to seek the clear approval of the Sudanese Government for the deployment of forces there as part of a comprehensive package that ensured the protection of Sudanese sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

16. Finally, Egypt shared the concerns expressed by many regarding the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation perpetrated by some individuals working in peacekeeping operations and emphasized the need to address it in order to preserve the reputation of the Organization and its role in peacekeeping.

17. **Mr. Jevremovic** (Serbia) said that although substantial experience had been gained with the increase in the number and complexity of peacekeeping operations, many shortcomings remained. He called for a thorough review and analysis of each peacekeeping mission and for closer cooperation between the Security Council and other United Nations bodies. The revised memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and troop-contributing countries was an important step forward in identifying administrative, logistic and financial conditions, as well as in setting standards of conduct for members of national contingents and for investigation of misconduct where alleged.

18. Early deployment of experienced and qualified personnel in sufficient numbers was instrumental to the success of any peacekeeping operation. The downsizing of some components of a mission could result in the creation of a culture of impunity.

Moreover, in some cases peacekeeping missions failed to completely fulfil their mandate. For example, in the province of Kosovo and Metohija, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) had failed to provide security for the non-Albanian population, which continued to be exposed to ethnically motivated attacks. As long as a significant part of the population remained displaced, stakeholders could hardly be expected to participate in political processes aimed at building a multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

19. However, Serbia remained committed to United Nations peacekeeping operations. It was already participating in the missions in Congo, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and was ready to join those in Lebanon, the Sudan and Afghanistan.

20. **Ms. Baaziz** (Algeria) said that sound financing, adequate logistical resources and an integrated approach were all essential to the success of a peacekeeping mission. Some peacekeeping missions had even contributed to peaceful periods of transition and to the successful organization of elections, demonstrating the central role they played in the maintenance of peace and security. The fact that, in future, the Peacebuilding Commission would be involved in the administration of post-conflict situations did not mean that peacekeeping operations should cease to be involved, as such operations were essential factors in the creation of durable peace in countries emerging from conflict.

21. While DPKO had achieved some positive results, as reflected for example in improvements in its operational planning capacity, major challenges remained. Cooperation between the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries should be strengthened in order to address the latter's concerns and to define practical ways to involve them in decisions affecting their troops in the field.

22. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the area of peacekeeping was also of great importance in conflict prevention, crisis management and stabilization. International assistance was indispensable if such groups as the African Union and subregional organizations were to be able fully to participate in stabilization and crisis resolution.

23. While reiterating her delegation's firm condemnation of the acts of sexual abuse and exploitation that had tarnished the honourable record of United Nations peacekeeping operations, she said that, in order to implement an effective policy of zero tolerance, other actions were needed at all levels, including by the member States, to enhance the awareness of mission personnel and inculcate in them an understanding of the conduct standards in force.

24. **Mr. Datsenko** (Ukraine) said that his delegation encouraged the Secretariat to continue its work with Member States on mechanisms to ensure that readily available reserves for rapid deployment operated effectively and at full capacity. Although improvements had been made in recent years, in the financing of peacekeeping operations, ways must be found to ensure timely reimbursements to troop-contributing countries for troops and contingent-owned equipment.

25. Given the urgent need to strengthen the protection of United Nations peacekeeping personnel, his delegation welcomed the establishment in the field of joint operations centres and joint mission analysis centres. His Government also was pleased to note the substantial progress made regarding the establishment of a standing police capacity and was prepared to make a contribution to support it. His delegation also supported the proposal to establish a substantial capacity of civilian peacekeepers and would welcome the involvement of major troop-contributing countries in the recruiting process.

26. His country strongly supported the United Nations zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and looked forward to the conclusion of deliberations concerning the revised draft model memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and Member States contributing resources to United Nations peacekeeping operations, the national investigation officers concept, and the draft United Nations comprehensive strategy on assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff or related personnel.

27. The Secretariat should continue its efforts to enhance partnerships and arrangements with regional and subregional organizations to meet the peacekeeping challenges it faced. The international community should provide assistance to strengthen the peacekeeping capacity of regional organizations, in particular the African Union. The Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries should continue their cooperation, which was indispensable

for conducting peacekeeping operations in the most effective manner at every stage. Close cooperation was also desirable between the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Commission and between DPKO and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

28. All peacekeeping personnel in his country received appropriate training prior to their deployment in the field. His delegation noted with appreciation the intention of the Secretariat to develop standardized peacekeeping training materials and looked forward to the formalization in 2007 of its policy on providing support to national training centres. Finally, he reiterated his country's readiness to continue being a reliable partner of the United Nations.

29. **Mr. Shinyo** (Japan) said that, given the increase in peacekeeping operations, every effort should be made to ensure efficient use of resources and to enhance accountability. It was also important to secure highly qualified personnel and to give them proper training, including on issues relating to sexual exploitation and abuse. His delegation was prepared to continue supporting the efforts by the United Nations to address those issues.

30. With regard to the call for strengthening the Secretariat so that it could effectively manage the expanding peacekeeping operations, while his Government was prepared to consider proposals in that regard, it would encourage the Secretariat to start by establishing an effective management system so that it could efficiently utilize existing resources.

31. The expansion of peacekeeping operations had also meant an expansion in their functions. The complicated mandates of some missions required inter-agency cooperation. The international community had to be cognizant of the fact that peacebuilding continued well beyond the end of peacekeeping activities. In that regard, his country welcomed the fact that the Peacebuilding Commission had commenced its full-fledged activities.

32. Employment of highly qualified experts was indispensable to the success of peacekeeping operations and Japan was studying a scheme to train civilian experts for peacebuilding, particularly in Asia. In connection with the personnel issue, he expressed concern at the continued imbalance in geographical representation in field missions.

33. The reports of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had underscored the importance of better interaction between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. As chair of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, his delegation had made an active effort in that regard, however further efforts were needed on the part of the Security Council and all Member States.

34. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba) said that the establishment of new and more complex peacekeeping operations must not be a substitute for efforts to resolve the root causes of conflicts and to develop long-term strategies for sustainable economic and social development.

35. Peacekeeping operations should strictly observe the purposes and principles of the Charter, in particular those referring to sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence. Regional arrangements for dealing with peacekeeping were valuable and should be in full accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

36. The Security Council must refrain from applying double standards when establishing the mandates of peacekeeping operations. Steps should be taken to guarantee that troop-contributing countries had a truly active role in all decision-making stages of peacekeeping operations.

37. Her delegation supported the zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and welcomed the progress made thus far in implementing the policy.

38. All Member States should pay their assessed contributions to finance peacekeeping operations without conditions, in accordance with their capacity to pay, and no State should be able to impose special conditions on peacekeeping operations by virtue of the high level of its contributions.

39. The principle of equitable geographical distribution should be respected with regard to personnel, both at Headquarters and in the field, and greater transparency was needed in the selection of high-ranking personnel. The current imbalance in such posts worked against the developing countries.

40. **Mr. Oh** (Republic of Korea) noted that the past year had been a challenging one for DPKO. Not only had it been decided to expand the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United

Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) in Darfur but it had also been decided to establish a new mission in Timor-Leste.

41. The UNIFIL expansion had been marked by exemplary cooperation between DPKO and Member States. However, in Darfur the international community was facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and it could not afford to fail. His delegation looked forward to the expansion of UNMIS as soon as possible through cooperation between the United Nations and the concerned parties.

42. Demands for new peacekeeping missions had continued to increase in recent years, particularly in Africa, placing a substantial burden on Member States. Responding to the challenges of those demands required enhanced cooperation and partnership with regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) or NATO.

43. Those experiences should serve as guideposts for the creation of rapid response capabilities for peacekeeping operations. His delegation urged the Secretariat to strengthen partnerships with regional organizations as a basis for enhanced rapidly deployable capacities and suggested that DPKO should publish a yearbook on global peace operations to highlight the contributions made by regional organizations.

44. There was an urgent need to strengthen the peacekeeping capacities of African nations and the African Union. Taking note of the 10-year plan for capacity-building within the Union, he encouraged Member States to support that substantive endeavour.

45. The Republic of Korea was exploring ways to enhance its contribution to peacekeeping efforts. Those efforts included the streamlining of domestic procedures for dispatching contingents to peacekeeping operations and cooperating with neighbouring countries on peace operations training.

46. The importance of timely consultations between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and donor countries could not be overemphasized, particularly at the start of a mission. In view of the domestic requirements of many Member States, DPKO should consult with Member States as early as possible. Finally, he commended the Secretariat for its efforts to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions and for its efforts to improve security for unarmed peacekeeping personnel, particularly military observers.

47. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana) said while many of the reforms outlined in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (contained in document A/55/305) had been carried out, much remained to be done. He therefore reiterated his country's support for the Secretary-General's agenda for the reform of peacekeeping operations.

48. Cooperation and consultation among troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat were imperative and should be increased. Regional and subregional organizations also had a vital role to play in conflict resolution and he therefore expressed his appreciation for the assistance that had been extended to the African Union (AU).

49. He also welcomed the progress made in addressing troop security, especially the proposed utilization of monitoring and surveillance to improve security in volatile situations, and encouraged DPKO to continue enhancing its intelligence-gathering and analysis capabilities.

50. The conduct of troops merited the constant attention of the United Nations and its Member States. There should be no tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers and troop-contributing countries should support the efforts of DPKO to eradicate such behaviour.

51. Peacekeeping was part of a process aimed at achieving sustainable peace and security. It created an environment that was conducive to development and good governance. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was an important step towards those goals.

52. **Mr. Chabi** (Morocco) said that the Secretary-General's proposal to focus the peacekeeping agenda on five priority areas for reform: partnerships, doctrine, people, organization and resources represented a welcome approach to strengthening peacekeeping operations and should be accompanied by a long-term strategy to ensure the success of such missions. He referred to a number of United Nations peacekeeping operations which had made significant contributions over the past two years and expressed the hope that the expansion of UNIFIL would contribute to lasting peace in the region.

53. It was imperative for rapidly deployable tactical reserves to be available when needed, and his delegation deplored the ineffectiveness of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System. An assessment of inter-mission cooperation mechanisms should be provided so that Member States could determine the option's usefulness for enhancing rapid deployment capabilities.

54. All Member States, including wealthy countries, should participate in peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, the Security Council must become more representative of the world's regions if it was to be considered the voice of the international community in the face of threats to international peace and security.

55. Given the increasingly multidimensional nature of United Nations peacekeeping operations, it was essential to improve the capacity of the Organization with respect to mission preparation, leadership, support and closure. It was also necessary to ensure a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, to which end the United Nations and its partners must remain actively engaged in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, restoration of the rule of law, and implementation of quick-impact economic reconstruction projects.

56. His delegation attached particular importance to the recruitment and training of peacekeeping personnel. Equitable geographical distribution and excellence should be the key recruitment criteria. The United Nations should also improve its ability to recruit and retain qualified, motivated and disciplined civilian peacekeeping personnel. Ensuring job security and merit-based promotion was important in that regard.

57. Ongoing close cooperation between the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries was essential at all stages of peacekeeping operations in order to build partnerships and trust, and consultations among the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries and the principal organs involved should be strengthened as well.

58. United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa deserved strong support, and his delegation welcomed any initiative to strengthen African peacekeeping capacity.

59. Contributing to peace and stability continued to be a key pillar of Morocco's foreign policy, as evidenced by its contributions to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, as well as to operations in Kosovo and Bosnia.

60. **Ms. Hodjo** (Togo), after expressing appreciation for past United Nations peacekeeping operations, particularly in Africa, noted with regret that, in the past decade, peacekeeping operations had become more numerous and more complex. In consequence, it was essential to enhance the resources available for peacekeeping operations, and to implement as rapidly as possible the programme of reform submitted the previous year, in order to upgrade the professionalism and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

61. In that context, Togo welcomed the addition, over the preceding decade, of the tasks of conflict prevention and peacebuilding to the traditional role of restoring peace. By involving the combatants in the search for solutions to conflicts, and notably in supporting sometimes difficult political transitions, the United Nations greatly increased its chances of success.

62. Noting that, while it was easy to unleash a conflict, it was much harder to bring it to a close, she called on Member States always to choose the path of dialogue and consultation, and to attempt to resolve the underlying causes of conflicts. Additionally, every country should find the political will to make a contribution, however modest, to the success of peacekeeping operations.

63. **Mr. Mbuende** (Namibia) said that having itself benefited from United Nations peacekeeping operations, his country had decided from the very outset to contribute troops and police officers to United Nations peacekeeping missions. The first such participation had come barely two years after independence.

64. Namibia attached great importance to the participation of women in the conflict resolution processes, including peacekeeping operations. Namibia had gradually increased the number of women deployed as peacekeepers and hoped that other troop-contributing countries would follow suit, since women added value through their differential approach and reaction to situations. However, it was of utmost importance that an environment conducive to the participation of women be created.

65. Clearly, the surge in demand for peacekeeping operations was stretching the capacity of the United Nations to respond. Since adequate resources were an obvious precondition for the success of any mission, it was important that the United Nations should work closely with other stakeholders. Cooperation with regional and subregional mechanisms was of utmost importance, and such cooperation should be two-way. His delegation welcomed all the efforts expended by both the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and other partners to help Africa develop its peacekeeping capacity. The establishment of a dedicated multidisciplinary capacity in DPKO, to assist Africa in its endeavour to establish an African standby force by 2010, was highly appreciated.

66. Finally, he applauded the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the establishment of the Peacebuilding Fund, which would go a long way towards speeding up the process of peacebuilding in a number of countries.

67. **Mr. Cato** (Philippines) welcomed the reforms being undertaken by DPKO to improve the capability of the United Nations to respond effectively to conflict situations and supported the proposal to create a 2,500-strong corps of civilian peacekeepers and the proposals for the creation of a standing police capacity and an enhanced, rapidly deployable reserve capacity. It also hoped to see the Military Division reinforced with additional professional planners.

68. The Philippines appreciated the efforts of DPKO to enhance cooperation with the troop-contributing countries and was pleased to know that DPKO had started work on the core policy document that would set out the fundamental principles, objectives and conditions for the successful deployment and disengagement of United Nations peacekeepers. It looked forward to the completion of what the Secretary-General had referred to as a "living doctrine", that would serve as guide for all peacekeeping personnel and also looked forward to improvements in the operational efficiency of peacekeeping missions, including the further elaboration of mission templates.

69. Noting that the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement continued to provide the bulk of peacekeepers, he said that his delegation would like to see a larger participation from the more developed countries. The prompt response of Italy and other troop contributors to the strengthened United Nations mission in Lebanon had been a welcome development that others should emulate.

70. He also called for arrangements that would allow troop contributors to partner together in support of United Nations peace operations, for example by enabling Member States willing to deploy personnel but lacking the necessary equipment to team up with another Member State that was willing to provide such equipment but did not have personnel.

71. As the largest troop contributor from South-East Asia, the Philippines attached serious importance to the issue of discipline and conduct in United Nations mission areas. It took note of the progress made in the enforcement of measures by DPKO, particularly the creation of Conduct and Discipline Units. The Philippines had recently revised the policy framework and guidelines governing its participation in peacekeeping operations. It had formalized and laid down a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse cases and could also be expected to send a clear message against prostitution in peacekeeping missions. Finally, it was ready to endorse the Secretary-General's proposals for victim support and the draft model memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and troop-contributing countries.

72. **Ms. Mladineo** (Croatia) said that Croatia was proud to be contributing to 11 of the 18 United Nations peacekeeping missions worldwide and that it would continue to enhance its contributions to United Nations peacekeeping efforts, putting special emphasis on the civilian component.

73. The expansion and increasingly multidimensional character of peacekeeping activities revealed a very clear need for continuous training of personnel. Croatia firmly supported all United Nations activities in that respect, and had organized, together with DPKO, eight international workshops on transitional justice, national reconciliation and the building of the culture of peace. It particularly appreciated the very useful regular briefings and reports of the Situation Centre for the troop-contributing countries.

74. Croatia also firmly believed that it was in the common interest to ensure that the aims of peacekeeping were not compromised in any way. Therefore, it was pleased to see that the recommendations contained in the report of the

Adviser to the Secretary-General on sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel (A/59/710) were being given serious consideration.

75. Finally, Croatia shared the views of the Under-Secretary-General on the necessity of building effective and complementary partnerships with local and international actors to ensure the sustainability of the achievements on the ground.

76. **Mr. Dhital** (Nepal) recalled that his country was the fifth largest contributor of military personnel and third largest contributor of police officers to United Nations peacekeeping operations and currently had 3,500 troops assigned to 13 missions. Given the challenges that the present peacekeeping operations faced, Nepal fully supported the agenda for meeting those challenges, which was outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/640) and which was based on five priority areas for reform: partnerships, doctrine, people, organization and resources.

77. Nepal also believed that the safety and security of United Nations personnel should continue to receive top priority. In that connection, he expressed his Government's sincere gratitude to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Secretary-General and the relevant departments and officials of the United Nations for their unstinting efforts to secure the release of the seven Nepalese peacekeepers who had been held hostage in the Democratic Republic of the Congo earlier in the year.

78. While appreciating the various measures employed by DPKO to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel, Nepal saw a need for a comprehensive strategy to prevent the taking of hostages and to secure their release when such events did happen. It would also be desirable for United Nations peacekeepers who sustained injuries or illness in discharging their duties to be given disability allowances and other compensation by the United Nations.

79. Close coordination among the Security Council, the United Nations Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries was crucial to the success of any United Nations mission. Nepal believed that the involvement of the troop-contributing countries with DPKO from the very outset and at every stage, would contribute to the smooth functioning and success of the mission.

80. Finally, Nepal fully supported the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, and was working closely with DPKO to make that policy effective. In that context, the recommendations made by the Group of Legal Experts merited careful examination.

81. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) emphasized that peacekeeping operations should be carried out in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and that it was essential to observe basic principles, including the consent of the parties, the non-use of force except in self-defence, impartiality, and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States. The peacekeeping capacity of the United Nations should be enhanced and all countries should contribute to such operations through the traditional channels, subject to the availability of domestic resources.

82. His delegation fully supported the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The report of the Group of Legal Experts on ensuring the accountability of United Nations staff and experts on mission with respect to criminal acts committed in peacekeeping operations, contained in document A/60/980, provided a sound basis for negotiations; such negotiations should take place soon.

83. Contributions by regional arrangements to peacekeeping operations should be made in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and other relevant principles and norms governing such operations, and should be carried out under the guidance, command and control of the United Nations and in a transparent manner. Such arrangements should be viewed as a temporary solution to filling the gap between United Nations peacekeeping capabilities and the demand for peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, inasmuch as most United Nations peacekeeping operations were being conducted in Africa, his delegation supported increased cooperation with the African Union and support for African capacity-building.

84. All Member States were potential troop- and police-contributing countries. Accordingly, any invitation by the Secretariat to meetings on establishing new United Nations peacekeeping operations or expanding existing ones should be

addressed to all Member States in a transparent manner.

85. His delegation paid tribute to the courage, service and sacrifice of all peacekeepers and condemned in the strongest terms the killing of any United Nations personnel. The deliberate killings of UNIFIL personnel by the Israeli Defense Forces in Lebanon in July 2006 had outraged the entire international community. Iran joined other troop-contributing countries in requesting the Secretary-General to continue to give the utmost priority to enhancing the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers, including civilian police and military observers in the field.

86. His delegation was concerned about the staffing and structure of DPKO and urged the Department to rectify the current imbalance of representation of unrepresented Member States in accordance with General Assembly resolutions.

87. His delegation appreciated the efforts of DPKO to provide national and regional peacekeeping training centres, as well as national training focal points located in Member States, with the necessary guidance for training United Nations peacekeeping personnel. His country was prepared to work with the United Nations and its Member States in the area of peacekeeping training activities by, inter alia, establishing a regional training centre in Iran.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

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Summary record of the 16th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 25 October 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:	Mr. Acharya	(Nepal)
later:	Mr. Andersson (Vice-Chairman)	(Sweden)
later:	Mr. Acharya (Chairman)	(Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 30: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

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06-58476 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 30: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Pouquet-El Chami** (France), speaking as working group Chairman, proposed that the Committee should defer taking action on the two draft resolutions under item 30 to a later date, to allow time for further reconciliation of views.

2. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

3. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (China) observed that peacekeeping operations were entering a new period of rapid development, in terms of scale, range of mandates and global recognition, thus placing greater demands on the Secretariat and on Member States. In order to respond, the Organization should improve its programming and management of the operations, and Member States must show the political will needed to maintain world and regional peace and security, while providing timely mission support.

4. In developing and reforming peacekeeping operations, the focus should be on adherence to Charter principles and to Security Council guidance, strict neutrality, and the use of force only in self-defence. It was also essential to cooperate closely with regional organizations and help them improve their valuable peacekeeping capacity. The African Union in particular should receive United Nations assistance in logistics, training, information technology and funds.

5. The security situation in some areas was grim, and the safety of the peacekeepers, a priority, must be ensured by the Secretariat through joint safety management, the use of technology to reduce risks, and better communication with troop-contributing countries.

6. Since conflict prevention relied on economic development and the building of structures and capabilities as much as on peacekeeping and demanded comprehensive strategies involving all the specialized United Nations agencies, the international financial institutions and the relevant regional bodies, it was also crucial for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to coordinate with the Peacebuilding Commission and its Support Office. Over the years, China itself had sent more than 6,000 peacekeepers on 16 operations in various parts of the world, and it would continue its active participation.

7. **Mr. Aljunied** (Singapore) said that the Department had done well, under challenging conditions involving increasingly complex mandates and dangers in the field, in managing the surge in peacekeeping operations. Planning, supervision and drawing the right lessons remained key factors. The lessons of Haiti and Timor-Leste, for example, were a reminder of the dangers of premature disengagement, while incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by some peacekeepers had stained the Organization's professional image.

8. Despite its achievements, however, the Department's work required more basic scrutiny. To move the reform agenda forward, wider agreement must be reached on the specific areas needing reform, and decisions made on priorities; and the troop-contributing countries must be consulted on an agreed mechanism to drive the process. The Department's work methods and expertise needed critical review and integration, in the interests of effective command and control. Coordination seemed to be a major weakness, and there must be better strategic thinking and forward planning. Learning from past operations, the Department should build up domain knowledge and peacekeeping doctrine and should strengthen its ability to share the lessons learned in the field quickly with other missions and with troop-contributing countries. The number of its military and police officials managing operations at Headquarters should also be increased.

9. The Department should establish systematic partnerships with regional groupings, which had their own expertise to offer. The many dimensions of peacekeeping required concomitant expertise in a wide range of fields requiring the Department to join with other institutions in assembling and deploying the needed capabilities. Peacekeepers and peacebuilders must become natural partners. Led by the Department, peacekeepers must work with security, technical, financial and humanitarian experts, from the early stages of a mission. Successful peacekeeping missions were those which ultimately allowed countries to stand on their own.

10. **Mr. Chem** (Cambodia) said that the dramatic increase of peacekeeping operations since 2002 showed that the world relied primarily on the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. Timely

deployment was required to meet the challenge and that depended on cooperation among all concerned, the political will to succeed, and mutual trust.

11. Cambodia, having recovered from decades of unparalleled destruction and taken command of its own destiny, had a rich experience in conflict resolution, national reconciliation and peacebuilding, which had led it to strong economic growth and stability. His country used to be a net recipient of international aid during the years of the United Nations-supervised transitional administration leading to the 1993 elections. In 2005, however, Cambodia had moved to the status of a contributor country, having provided forces or equipment to the missions in Sudan and Timor-Leste.

12. The peacekeeping operations in the Sudan showed the need for better coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations like the African Union. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was working towards the establishment, in the long term, of the ASEAN security community, which would eventually also become active in strengthening the work of the United Nations.

13. **Mr. Almorad** (Kuwait) said that while peacekeeping operations had an increasingly vital role to play in defusing tensions and crises around the world, the tasks, goals and leadership structures of such operations must be clearly defined and new ways must be devised for enhancing coordination and consultation between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries in order to incorporate lessons learned and best practices. The role of the United Nations in early warning and preventive diplomacy also needed to be strengthened while there should be a comprehensive review of training needs to improve coordination in field mission planning. He welcomed the increasing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, expressed the hope that enhancement of the standby arrangements system would improve rapid deployment capabilities and endorsed the measures to implement the recommendations of the Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel.

14. He commended the United Nations for its role in maintaining boundary markers between Kuwait and Iraq pursuant to Security Council resolution 833 (1993) and reaffirmed Kuwait's readiness to provide the Department with any assistance necessary for completing that task. Even though Kuwait's share of the peacekeeping budget had increased fivefold over the preceding few years, it was committed to meeting its obligations in a timely fashion and urged other countries to do likewise. His delegation condemned actions that threatened or targeted United Nations peacekeeping personnel, who were risking their lives in the service of peace, and urged that everything possible should be done to ensure their safety.

15. **Ms. Williams** (Jamaica) observed that contemporary peacekeeping operations had become increasingly challenging and complex, given their multifaceted, dynamic nature, the recent upsurge in the demand for them, the increased threat to the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel around the world, the expanded scope of the operations and the limited resources available. While primarily concerned with conflicts between States, missions also operated in domestic conflicts deemed to pose a risk to international peace and security or, in cases of gross violations of international law.

16. The effectiveness of peacekeeping operations depended on a close collaboration between the international military, civilian and police components. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should pursue the reform it had begun in 2000. It had successfully increased the quantity and quality of staff both at Headquarters and in the field, and instituted greater cooperation with the troop-contributing countries. Yet there was substantial room for improvement, since at the same time it faced difficulty in recruiting qualified and well-trained civilian staff and lacked sufficient guidance and oversight systems and well-defined policies for peacekeeping staff.

17. For over a decade, Jamaica had been making modest contributions to peacekeeping activities by providing military and/or police officers to the missions in Haiti, Liberia and the Sudan, and possibly to the forthcoming mission to Timor-Leste.

18. Jamaica supported the work being undertaken to improve standards of conduct in peacekeeping missions and endorsed the zero-tolerance approach to sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers, all cases of which must be investigated and dealt with. It also welcomed the close cooperation between the Department of Safety and Security and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in a unified security management system to protect personnel in the field.

The peacekeeping personnel who risked their lives daily, and especially those who had lost their lives in pursuit of peace, deserved tribute.

19. **Mr. Rampangilei** (Indonesia) saluted the more than 2,000 persons who had paid the ultimate price for United Nations peacekeeping, 29 of whom had been Indonesian peacekeepers. Since 1956, Indonesia had participated in 26 missions worldwide, the most recent being in south Lebanon.

20. The large number of deployments and the evolving nature of peacekeeping operations were a substantial challenge, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would need to put in place effective planning and management systems, skilled staff and sufficient technical, material and financial resources. The Department had made commendable efforts to restructure itself and become more field-oriented. Indonesia looked forward to effective reforms that would ensure the complete support and the response systems needed both at Headquarters and in the field. It would appreciate regular updates as to what the Department was doing in that regard, how accountability was being enforced and what had been done to avoid fatalities.

21. Clear mandates and a full understanding by all those involved as to their respective responsibilities were intrinsic to safe and effective operations. The Secretariat needed to improve communication and information technology capabilities in the field to ensure an effective interplay between it, the field officers and all others involved in an operation. Headquarters must also coordinate more effectively with the troop-contributing countries so that troops could be deployed rapidly and systematically and, once in the field, receive equal treatment.

22. While the United Nations budget for peacekeeping had risen to $5 billion, it still represented only 0.5 per cent of global military spending. Peacekeeping operations demanded adequate resources, as they increasingly performed non-traditional tasks such as mediation, disarmament, election supervision and assistance in the reform of security sectors, social services and even government finances. Ineffective performance due to a lack of resources would make the United Nations lose credibility and cost the peacekeepers critical local support.

23. Complex mandates required trained staff of the highest calibre. His delegation welcomed the Department's improved recruitment systems and the establishment of the Integrated Training Service and the Best Practices Section. The development of a core policy document — on which Member States should be fully consulted — setting comprehensive guidelines for peacekeeping was another positive step.

24. Sexual abuse and exploitation by any United Nations peacekeeping personnel was unacceptable and the recommendations made by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the matter should be fully implemented.

25. Real peace would come only when the international community remained closely involved with local stakeholders in finding political solutions and in creating conditions for effective reconstruction and development, the features also of a successful exit strategy, and unfortunately a slow process. Although the primary responsibility for nation-building and the maintenance of peace lay with the national governments, they needed international support, which must continue when the post-conflict situations were no longer in the headlines, for that was the critical phase in the consolidation of peace and the transition to normalcy.

26. The Peacebuilding Commission was well placed to facilitate peacekeeping and could leverage resources with the greatest impact because of its role as coordinator of the national and international bodies involved in peacekeeping. The concept of joint programming was promising, and his delegation would be following the outcome of the integrated missions in Sierra Leone and Burundi, in the hope that successful models there could be replicated. It was also important for peacekeepers not to withdraw too hastily from conflict-scarred countries. Peacemaking would be successful only when the international partners engaged all actors on an equal basis and addressed the root causes of grievances equitably, in accordance with the Charter and international law. Respect for United Nations peacekeeping was unmatched and it remained one of the most potent tools in the hands of the international community for the promotion of international peace and security.

27. *Mr. Andersson (Sweden), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

28. **Mr. Wali** (Nigeria) said that, despite some regrettable failures, United Nations peacekeeping had become synonymous with peace and security. However, peacekeepers were exposed to difficult situations in

which some governments or groups were unable or unwilling to address the consequences of poor governance and abuses. He condemned the kidnapping and killing of peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Lebanon. Perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers should be subject to international law. It was important to establish a new doctrine on peacekeeping that outlined policies, procedures and guidelines that would meet future challenges.

29. The peaceful resolution of conflicts and support for multilateral efforts towards global peace and security were core principles of his Government's foreign policy. His Government's commitment to peacekeeping included the deployment of troops, police and officers of the Nigerian Prisons Service and Immigration Department. The emphasis should be on prevention rather than intervention, and preventative measures would reduce the number and cost of peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, there was a need to support and enhance the capacity of regional institutions to complement United Nations peacekeeping functions. In order to promote nation-building it was necessary to focus on youth employment and on repairing the social and economic infrastructure of the affected countries as well as on good governance, the rule of law and security sector reform. His delegation welcomed the launching of the Peacebuilding Fund and the country-specific meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone and Burundi. It welcomed the establishment of the Group of Legal Experts to investigate criminal acts, sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeeping personnel. Concrete measures were needed to eliminate those reprehensible acts and to preserve the image, credibility and integrity of the Organization. His Government supported a zero tolerance policy.

30. The situation in Darfur represented one of the greatest challenges to the African Union and the recent decision to extend the mandate of the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) reflected the continent's commitment to peace in that region. His Government welcomed the support package established by the United Nations and the African Union and looked forward to further progress in the framework of the Secretary-General's consultations with the Government of the Sudan. His delegation fully supported the reform process and was confident that those reforms would allow the Organization to meet the high demand for peacekeeping operations worldwide.

31. **Mr. Navoti** (Fiji) said that his Government fully supported the proposed reforms aimed at increasing the professionalism, management and efficiency of peacekeeping operations. The establishment of a cadre of civilian peacekeepers would create a professional and effective management capacity and in particular would enhance mid-level management capacity. It was evident that the civilian police unit was understaffed and could not cope with the mandates of existing and newly established peacekeeping missions. His Government would support proposals for budgetary adjustments aimed at addressing that shortcoming.

32. Criminality and misconduct tarnished the reputation of the Organization and his Government supported a zero tolerance policy. Due consideration would be given to the report of the Group of Legal Experts contained in document A/60/980, which recommended the development of an international convention to address jurisdiction and related issues. As peacekeeping had evolved, the distinction between peacekeeping and peacebuilding had been blurred. However, those two processes complemented each other in a mutually reinforcing fashion and his delegation called for closer working relations between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Support Office. Cooperation between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Security and Safety should also be continued to ensure the security of uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel.

33. **Mr. Ohlson** (United States of America) said that peacekeeping missions had increasingly complex integrated mandates. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations had made progress in improving its planning capacity, logistics and relations with regional organizations and by setting standards for conduct and establishing relations with donors. Careful coordination was especially important and his delegation welcomed the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, particularly on the country-specific studies. Rule of law, economic viability and representational government must be established early and sustained throughout and after peacekeeping operations. As soon as possible after the active phase of a conflict had been concluded, it was important to distinguish between those tasks that were appropriate for the Department and those that should be addressed by other stakeholders. Furthermore, it was necessary to examine whether some peacekeeping operations were prolonging conflicts by not forcing

parties to resolve their differences through political or diplomatic means. Peacekeeping operations should not substitute for a full and participatory process aimed at complete conflict resolution.

34. Significant progress had been made in addressing the issues of sexual exploitation and abuse. However, the Organization should not let its guard down to allow those types of crimes to be perpetrated on such a scale and with such impunity again. The firm commitment of Member States had led to many changes in the way peacekeeping was performed. His delegation encouraged all Member States to work together in adopting the core precepts of the draft model memorandum of understanding. All Member States had the duty to investigate and prosecute in a timely manner any of their citizens who were involved in breaches of conduct and discipline. It was important to leave political exigencies aside and focus on the initiatives and reforms needed to ensure that peacekeeping was conducted in the most efficient and professional manner possible. Many lives depended on that objective being met.

35. *Mr. Acharya (Nepal) resumed the Chair.*

36. **Ms. Makhumula** (Malawi) said that her Government had contributed over 93,000 men and women to United Nations peacekeeping operations and fully supported the effective manner in which those operations had been conducted. Her Government welcomed efforts aimed at enhancing African peacekeeping capacities in areas such as establishing a common doctrine, training standards, logistical support, funding and institutional capacity for the planning and management of peacekeeping operations. The African Union peacekeeping operation in Darfur required the support and logistical backing of the international community. Her Government welcomed the report of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations working group, which recommended that staff officers should be provided with subsistence allowance in lieu of reimbursing the troop-contributing country. Furthermore, in the ongoing reform process, it was important to address the imbalance in the geographical representation of Member States. Her Government was committed to providing troops and also personnel trained in handling allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

37. **Ms. Ziade** (Lebanon) said that her delegation supported the reform process that was aimed at addressing the challenges in peacekeeping operations. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) had been deployed in 1978 to assist the Government of Lebanon in establishing stability and social cohesion. UNIFIL had suffered from Israeli aggression during the second Israeli invasion of 1982. In 1986, UNIFIL had been bombarded and had suffered heavy losses; it had been bombarded again in 2006 with four officers losing their lives. In Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) the mandate of UNIFIL had been broadened and extended until 31 August 2007 to deal with ongoing Israeli aggression. Her delegation commended the speed with which troops had been deployed to Lebanon and the commitment of the international community to the just cause of Lebanon. The safety and security of UNIFIL personnel were the responsibility of all Member States. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy had described the cooperation between UNIFIL and the Government of Lebanon as excellent. The work of UNIFIL was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respected the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon and did not intervene in matters that lay within the jurisdiction of that State. It was the desire of her Government to establish peace in the Middle East and to make the Middle East an example of successful peacebuilding.

38. **Ms. Turuphial** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that peacekeeping operations should be undertaken in strict compliance with the Charter, including the principles of sovereignty, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs and territorial integrity. They should be governed by criteria of impartiality, the non-use of force except in self-defence and the consent of the parties. While regional arrangements contributed to peacekeeping operations, they should be in line with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

39. Her delegation supported Security Council resolution 1353 (2001) on strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries but wished to stress that such countries, the majority of which were developing countries, should participate actively in the planning of all peacekeeping operations. Her delegation was concerned about efforts to combine peacekeeping operations, which were short-term and task-specific, with peacebuilding operations, which were long-term and should be carried out by the

relevant United Nations agencies. It was also concerned about sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeeping mission personnel and supported the Organization's zero tolerance policy and the campaigns and codes of conduct devised by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to address the problem.

40. Finally, all Member States must pay their assessed contributions according to their capacity to pay. Although some States paid higher assessed contributions, that did not entitle them to special privileges in the management of peacekeeping operations.

41. **Mr. Song** Se Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that strict observance of the principle of respect for sovereignty in all United Nations peacekeeping operations was essential to world peace and security. A series of cases of sexual abuse perpetrated by peacekeeping personnel against civilians were a violation of sovereignty and of human rights. The prime cause of those abuses was the lack of decisive measures by the United Nations and participant countries to observe the principle of respect for sovereignty and human rights, and the historical lack of accountability for sexual abuses. He called for legal measures to punish human rights violations committed in peacekeeping operations and for measures to hold Japan accountable for its past crimes.

42. Peacekeeping operations could not be successful if individual countries did not stop using United Nations operations for improper political and military purposes. A first step towards ending the misuse of United Nations operations would be to dismantle the United Nations Command, illegally established by the United States for its own purposes, which had blocked the settlement of the Korean issue and damaged United Nations credibility.

43. **Mr. Al-Otmi** (Yemen) said that it was important for peacekeeping operations to stay within their mandates, use force only in self-defence and avoid interfering in the internal affairs of States. Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on peacekeeping in the Sudan should be carried out with the Sudanese Government's approval, and any troop deployment should be carried out with the consent of the Sudanese Government. Yemen, like many other States, condemned the attacks against United Nations facilities and personnel and believed that more needed to be done to protect the lives of peacekeepers. The principle of equitable geographic distribution should be applied to civilian and military posts in peacekeeping forces in order to ensure neutrality and universality.

44. Yemen shared international concern over sexual exploitation and abuse committed by some United Nations personnel, which had tarnished the Organization's credibility and reputation, and welcomed the efforts of the Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, and the Secretary-General's policy of zero-tolerance for such actions. The regional United Nations information centres, such as the one in Sana'a, needed to be utilized to improve the Organization's image.

45. The establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission would enable the Organization to play a vital role in post-conflict reconstruction and development; the Commission's mandate needed to be clarified, however. Yemen also supported a genuine three-way partnership among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries and would cooperate with the Department and all peace-loving peoples for the dissemination of a culture of peace.

46. **Mr. Stastoli** (Albania) said that Albania remained committed to increasing its contribution to all areas of peacekeeping operations, with a core national target of full membership in the European Union. In that regard, it looked forward to cooperating with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations both in the framework of United Nations peacekeeping operations and, in a larger partnership with the European Union.

47. The increase in peacekeeping operations had enhanced the Department's competence, and its successes should be publicized, in particular through its Best Practices Section, to highlight what it had learned.

48. Albania supported reform of the Department, in particular the establishment of rapid-deployment capabilities. Troop conduct should be properly addressed, emphasizing respect for host country customs and culture. As adequate financial and material resources were needed to ensure the security of all mission staff, the Secretariat should establish an effective management system to account for mission expansion and to ensure finances were properly channelled. All issues were equally important and

could only be addressed with the serious commitment of Member States.

49. **Mr. Kebret** (Ethiopia) said that global peace and security required more effective peacekeeping missions with adequate human, financial and logistical support. Ethiopia would continue to do its part by remaining a major troop-contributing country. Increased demand for peacekeeping operations required clear, coherent policies for effective work. There was a need for a United Nations-wide system of coordination in the planning, conduct and support of integrated missions, in particular strategies for coordination among the Peacebuilding Commission, its Support Office and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

50. Partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations were critical, taking into account in particular the special needs of Africa and the importance of a strong African Union (AU). The Department should concentrate on working with AU to strengthen regional peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

51. Although encouraging work had been done by Africa in the area of peacekeeping, conflicts had persisted in some parts of the continent because AU was facing challenges that were greater than its resources. While his delegation welcomed the support of the United Nations to AU, including the joint action plan between the Department and the AU Peace Support Operations Division to build and develop Africa's peacekeeping capacity, it felt that such support had lacked strategy, consistency and its own budget. Ethiopia therefore welcomed the proposed arrangement that would streamline cooperation between the United Nations and AU in peacekeeping matters.

52. Sexual exploitation and abuse required the immediate action of United Nations Member States and concerned parties. While the establishment of conduct and discipline units at Headquarters and in the field was a welcome development, the capacity of the Office of Internal Oversight Services needed to be enhanced to avoid delays in investigations.

53. **Mr. Kapoma** (Zambia) welcomed the close collaboration between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Safety and Security in the establishment of field structures such as joint operations centres and joint mission analysis centres. Since the military and police divisions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations were understaffed, he supported the call to strengthen the Department. In that regard, he urged the Department to equitably allocate vacancies to consistent troop-contributing countries to address their lack of representation and to quickly inform Member States of the final selection of candidates for positions so that unsuccessful candidates could be deployed elsewhere. His delegation endorsed the Department's proposed measures to address conduct and discipline in peacekeeping operations, in particular the revision of the draft model memorandum of understanding with regard to the provision of troops. Finally, he welcomed the joint United Nations-AU action plan for assistance to African Union peacekeeping capacity-building.

54. **Mr. Baatar** (Mongolia) said that quality training for peacekeeping personnel was essential and welcomed progress made by the Integrated Training Service. Mongolia was developing training in the context of its peacekeeping capacities and had introduced United Nations peacekeeping training standards for all pre-deployment troop-training programmes. It also intended to establish a regional peacekeeping training centre for regional militaries supporting peacekeeping operations.

55. As a troop-contributing country, Mongolia was concerned about the danger posed to peacekeeping troops as a result of issues of sexual exploitation and abuse. He welcomed the Department's efforts to combat the problem, stressing that Mongolian troops were thoroughly instructed on issues of sexual exploitation and abuse in pre-deployment training programmes. He also welcomed the Department's priority of establishing an exit strategy, as it was important for the effective allocation of limited resources. Close collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission would also contribute to successful exit strategies.

56. **Ms. Jayasuriya** (Sri Lanka) said that a substantial number of Sri Lankan military and police personnel were currently serving in United Nations missions. The expansion, in both scope and scale, of United Nations peacekeeping operations had made them ever more complex and thus increased the need for additional resources, both human and financial. Peacekeeping was, however, only an intermediate step on the long path leading towards sustainable peace and was therefore no substitute for post-conflict peacebuilding and the pursuit of amicable settlements to protracted conflicts, which were best handled by

other United Nations bodies, such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office. Closer coordination and cooperation between such bodies and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations could facilitate the timely withdrawal of peacekeeping troops without jeopardizing opportunities to find long-term solutions to conflicts.

57. It was essential that the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, such as the consent of the parties, non-intervention in matters within domestic jurisdiction, abstention from use of force except in self-defence and impartiality, should be observed during peacekeeping operations. Any regional arrangements in peacekeeping operations should therefore be in line with the provisions of the Charter. In that connection, her delegation welcomed United Nations efforts to augment regional peacekeeping efforts by the African Union.

58. It was important to have a mechanism for providing troop-contributing countries with early and full information on new missions or expanded mandates. Peacekeeping missions should be given clearly defined and pragmatic mandates.

59. The safety and security of peacekeeping personnel were of the utmost concern to her delegation. The necessary resources must be made available, but better coordination between Headquarters and missions was also crucial to overall efficiency. Reinforcement of the human resource capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be carried out in an open and transparent manner, ensuring equitable opportunities. Her delegation was happy to offer the facilities of the Sri Lanka Institute of Peace Support Operations Training, which could accommodate 500 military personnel at a time, for future United Nations training programmes.

60. Sri Lanka endorsed the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. It commended the Department's work on promoting accountability and increasing awareness. The Department of Public Information should also be involved in explaining peacekeeping operations to the public.

61. **Mr. Chidyausiku** (Zimbabwe) said that the growing number of peacekeeping operations indicated a regrettable rise in hostilities around the world, which, in turn, resulted in a huge budget for the United Nations. Close cooperation was required between States and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for the timely provision of personnel and much-needed financial support. His delegation urged all stakeholders in conflict prevention to take action to eradicate conflict not only by providing peacekeepers but by addressing the root causes of conflict. The safety and security of peacekeeping personnel must be given priority. The establishment of joint operations centres and joint mission analysis centres was a welcome development in that regard.

62. Acts of misconduct, particularly sexual offences, by uniformed and civilian personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations had tarnished the image of the United Nations. His delegation therefore welcomed the appointment of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse as a means of strengthening the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation. It was also pleased to note that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was not only seeking to punish offenders but also working on ways of helping victims. The Department's efforts should be complemented by Member States, which should incorporate courses on conduct and discipline in training programmes for peacekeeping personnel. He expressed appreciation for the Department's assistance to the African Union Mission in the Sudan. The regional arrangements system was working well.

63. **Ms. Shanidze** (Georgia) commended the efforts to meet modern threats and challenges, both through the Peacebuilding Commission and through increased resources for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Her delegation welcomed the establishment of the Standing Police Capacity. It was crucial that peacekeeping troops should be properly trained and equipped to fulfil their mission. Sometimes, however, experience gained from previous operations was not fully applied. Political considerations not infrequently limited an operation's efficiency.

64. The situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, was a case in point. The peacekeeping operation had been ineffective because the peacekeepers, whose mandate was to maintain the ceasefire and create conditions for the safe return of 300,000 internally displaced persons and refugees ethnically cleansed from the territory of Abkhazia, had been deployed from a neighbouring country. Such a course of action was controversial in principle and should be confined to the rare occasions when the impartiality of the neighbouring country concerned was beyond doubt. That was not the case

with regard to Abkhazia. Refugees had no guarantee of safety. Almost 2,000 Georgians had been killed and numerous crimes had been committed in the areas under the responsibility of the peacekeepers, who, by their own admission, had undergone no specialist training and considered themselves part of the military. Not surprisingly, Georgians increasingly considered the troops to have the sole function of isolating Abkhazia from the rest of Georgia. The majority of the people living in Abkhazia had been granted Russian citizenship, so the peacekeeping force was clearly not impartial but rather sought to alienate the two sides. The Secretary-General's report (S/1994/80) had put forward two options: a traditional peacekeeping force under United Nations command or a multilateral force with troops from interested States, including the Russian Federation. It had, regrettably, been decided to adopt the second option. The situation should be rectified with the establishment of a proper peacekeeping operation, with greater international involvement. Only thus could real progress be made in the peace process.

65. **Mr. Obando** (Peru) said that, over recent years, peacekeeping operations had developed a multidimensional nature: their military capacity had grown but so had the civilian police component. The international community should not, however, overlook the common denominator of internal conflicts, namely exclusion, poverty and marginalization. Unless preventive action was required, the international community's efforts should be directed at development strategies. If conflict management failed to distinguish between the symptom and the cause, no peacekeeping operation would be sustainable.

66. Recent experience showed that, when a conflict broke out, the United Nations should act immediately to prevent and mitigate massive human rights violations. For that reason, Peru had consistently expressed support for the United Nations to have the necessary rapid reaction capacity using troops made available by States that volunteered them unconditionally and in accordance with a pre-established mandate. The weakness of the current system was illustrated by the experience of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. On the basis of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), immediate reinforcements had been required, owing to the possibility of a resumption of the conflict. They had been found in record time, but it had still taken two months to amass the minimum 5,000-strong force. The uncertainty, and the probability of more irreversible damage, would have been avoided had the Organization had rapid-deployment strategic reserves at its disposal.

67. The need to adjust to growing demand and the increasing complexity of peacekeeping operations made it essential to carry out the previously agreed reforms to the structure and composition of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the interests of efficiency. One particularly important reform would be to develop withdrawal strategies for peacekeeping operations in order to avoid the recurrence of a given conflict and lay the foundations for sustainable development in the country concerned.

68. His delegation commended the progress made with regard to the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeeping personnel. Not only should the zero-tolerance policy be maintained, however, but all those involved should provide assurances on impunity, so that those responsible for such acts were duly punished.

69. Over the past few years, Peru had increased its participation in peacekeeping operations and currently had personnel based in Haiti, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and the Sudan. It was also interested in working with the Department on training courses for peacekeepers.

70. **Mr. Zaemsky** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said, with reference to the statement by the representative of Georgia, that the Georgian delegation was understandably dismayed by Security Council resolution 1716 (2006), which presented a balanced view of the conflict between Abkhazia and Georgia. Unlike the representative of Georgia, he would not burden the Committee with the details of what was essentially a bilateral issue. He merely urged the Georgian delegation to accept the existing agreements. The Georgian statement had nothing to do with peacekeeping operations in general. It was tendentious and inappropriate.

Reports of the group of legal experts on ensuring the accountability of United Nations staff and experts on mission with respect to criminal acts committed in peacekeeping operations; advising on making the standards contained in the Secretary-General's Bulletin binding on contingent members; and standardizing the norms of conduct so that they are applicable to all categories of peacekeeping personnel

71. **The Chairman** drew attention to a non-paper submitted by him in the form of a draft resolution, which read as follows:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 59/300 of 22 June 2005, in which it endorsed the proposals, recommendations and conclusions contained in Part II of the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on its resumed session [A/59/19/Rev.1],

"*Recalling in particular* Part II, Chapter II, paragraph 40 of that report, which recommended that the Secretary-General appoint a group of legal experts to prepare and submit to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session for its consideration a comprehensive report,

"*Recalling* the decision of the General Assembly to allocate Peacekeeping Item 33, 'Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects,' to the Sixth Committee [A/61/252] as well as the SPDC (Fourth Committee),

"1. *Takes note* of the first report of the group of legal experts,[1]

"2. *Requests* that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations considers the relevant recommendations of the first report of the group of legal experts during the sixty-first session,

"3. *Requests* that the second report[2] of the group of legal experts be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session for consideration by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations."

[1] A/60/980, providing advice on the recommendation contained in Part II, chapter II, paragraph 40 (a) of the 2005 report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations [A/59/19/Rev.1].

[2] Providing advice on the recommendation contained in Part II, Chapter II, paragraph 40 (b) and 40 (c) of the 2005 report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations [A/59/19/Rev.1]."

72. The item had been allocated to both the Fourth and the Sixth Committees, but the division of labour had not yet been decided. He invited preliminary comments on the non-paper.

73. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) said that there was no obvious need for the draft resolution. It was hard to believe that the first report of the group of legal experts would not be considered or that the second report would not be submitted to the General Assembly unless the draft resolution were adopted. Moreover, there was no precedent for draft resolutions to be submitted on peacekeeping. If it had known that there had been a change of policy, his delegation might have submitted a draft resolution on, for example, safety and security.

74. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) expressed surprise that the Committee needed to submit the draft resolution to the Sixth Committee to obtain a legal opinion. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was perfectly capable of undertaking the task.

75. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution was needed in order to ensure that the first report of the group of legal experts was considered at the sixty-first session. There was no question of having submitted the draft resolution to the Sixth Committee for a legal overview; responsibility was shared between the two Committees. The draft resolution did not have to go forward if the Fourth Committee considered it unnecessary. Delegations were free to submit draft resolutions on any topic.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.17

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 17th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 26 October 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 29: Effects of atomic radiation

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06-58733 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 29: Effects of atomic radiation (A/61/46 and Corr.1)

1. **The Chairman** invited the Secretary of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation to make a presentation on the Committee's work.

2. **Mr. Crick** (Secretary of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation) recalled that the Committee, which had been established in 1955, had its mandate renewed annually to assess the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation worldwide and to disseminate its findings. It had 21 member States, although other States and organizations provided data. Its funding came from the regular budget of the United Nations rather than the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as was sometimes thought, although UNEP was in charge of administering the Committee. The secretariat staff comprised one Professional and two General Service staff. The Committee's annual meeting was attended not only by its member States but also by 100 cost-free experts of the highest calibre. Every four or five years, it published its findings, which were greatly appreciated by the scientific community. The latest substantive reports, issued in 2000 and 2001, would profit from being shorter, but producing a synthesis required extra resources. Generally speaking, the Committee was better at communicating with scientists than with the General Assembly or the public.

3. The Committee's functions were, first, to identify issues that needed to be addressed. Secondly, it produced scientific assessments, on the basis of data provided by States and organizations, which often had a profound impact. For example, in the early 1990s, the Committee had shown that the risk from ionizing radiation was greater than had been thought. As a result, dose limits for the public and workers had been reduced and that was reflected in the legislation of many States. Thirdly, it considered global knowledge management, a field in which technology was constantly changing. The Committee's findings were passed on to the International Commission on Radiological Protection or direct to various United Nations agencies, which, in turn, used them as the basis for their own conventions or regulations.

4. He gave a brief explanation of the effects of various doses of radiation, which, at very high levels, such as those encountered by the firemen who had dealt with the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986, could lead to burns, radiation sickness and death and, at lower levels, to an increasing risk of cancer. Although it could safely be said that the higher the dose of radiation, the higher the risk of cancer, it was impossible, in view of the many other causes of cancer, to attribute any particular case to radiation. In order to gain insight into the cancer risks of relatively low doses of radiation, the Committee had carried out a review of all new relevant studies and followed up exposed populations on a longer-term basis, particularly survivors of the bombs that had fallen on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That review was set out in the scientific report contained in the report on its fifty-fourth section (A/61/46, sect. II.A). The Committee had concluded that there was no major change in the risks of cancer.

5. Section B of the scientific report considered cardiovascular disease, which was adversely affected by high doses of radiation. The Committee had found that there was no clear evidence of the effect of lower doses. Section C dealt with "non-targeted" or "indirect" radiation, on which there was a plethora of important new research. The overall significance was as yet unclear and further surveillance would be needed. One example of a new discovery was the fact that radiation could hit one cell and cause DNA mutation in surrounding cells as well.

6. In section D, the Committee had looked into whether radiation exposure affected the immune system. It had undertaken a major review of exposed groups and animal and cellular studies. Its finding had been that high doses of radiation could have a depressive effect, while the effect of low doses was uncertain: both stimulatory and suppressive effects had been found. Lastly, section E considered the risks from radon, an inert radioactive gas that percolated from the soil and to which everyone was exposed. Residential data were compared with earlier data on miners and the Committee's conclusion had been that there was no need to change the risk factor for radon. Much work had been done, using new cellular, genetic and microbiology techniques and taking advantage of longer patient follow-up periods. Although differences did emerge in detailed analyses, the overall risk factors remained essentially unchanged.

7. At its session in May 2006, the Committee, which was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, had approved five annexes for publication and reviewed the drafts of five others.

8. The agenda for the 2007 session included the studies envisaged for publication in 2007, on Chernobyl radiation levels and effects, accident exposures and public and worker exposures, and in 2008, on medical exposures and effects on non-human biota, and a discussion of the future programme of work.

9. Between 1980 and 1992, the Scientific Committee's annual budget had generally declined in real terms, even as the cost-free assistance available to it was falling. A P-5 post had been abolished in the 1992-1993 biennium, precisely when the pace of communication and scientific development had been stepped up and the number of references to the Committee's work in the scientific community had soared.

10. The budgetary constraints that had caused his predecessor to resign and had overburdened the secretariat had obviously had an impact on the quality of the Scientific Committee's work and its outreach to the public. Its studies were no longer as assuredly reliable, thus undermining confidence and credibility, and there had been delays in their publication — the twentieth-anniversary Chernobyl report being a case in point — which in turn had hampered the work of the other specialized agencies in the field; it had become impossible to engage first-class experts, and difficult to address cross-disciplinary aspects. What the Committee needed was the restoration of the P-5 post, so that there would be a permanent staff member with expertise in radiation biology, communications and coordination, who would keep up with the pace of scientific development and ensure continuity. Also, taking inflation into account, more funds were needed to enable the Scientific Committee to regain the ground lost.

11. The financial crisis was seriously hindering the output of a body known for its independence and scientific objectivity that was highly respected by Governments, other international organizations and the scientific community, and whose findings critically underpinned international radiation protection programmes. It was certainly more desirable to develop global consensus in the field through the sharing of knowledge and information, before the intrusion of politics in the form of national or regional initiatives.

12. **Ms. Gatehouse** (Australia), speaking as Chairman of the Scientific Committee during its 2006 session, said that for 50 years the Committee had served a vital function, providing an authoritative scientific review of sources, levels and effects of ionizing radiation. It had gone on to address new challenges in relation to radiation exposure and its effects on humans and on non-human organisms, as they had arisen. Governments and organizations throughout the world now relied on the Scientific Committee's estimates as the scientific basis for evaluating radiation risk, establishing radiation-protection and safety standards and regulating radiation sources. Within the United Nations system, for instance, radiation health standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were based on its estimates. The Committee's 20-year review of the health effects of the Chernobyl accident was being awaited with anticipation.

13. The current level of funding for the Scientific Committee's work seemed to be inadequate, diminishing its effectiveness even as authoritative assessments of radiation effects were becoming more crucial in many areas, including the long-term management of radioactive waste, the potential impact of malevolent uses of radioactive material, climate change, or the place of nuclear power in achieving energy security.

14. She introduced a draft resolution under item 29, the text of which would be circulated the following day. The draft resolution requested the Scientific Committee to continue to review important issues in the field of ionizing radiation, requested the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to continue providing effective support for the Committee and to ensure the strengthening of its current funding and addressed the question of the membership of the Committee. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

15. **Ms. Kanerva** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and in addition, Iceland, Moldova, Norway and Ukraine, said

that the report of the Scientific Committee on its fifty-fourth session (A/61/46), confirming its status as the principal international body in its field, would be indispensable for drafting national and international standards to protect against the effects of atomic radiation. The European Union fully supported the Committee's work and would continue to exchange information with it. It encouraged the Committee to pursue its study of the long-term health and environmental effects of ionizing radiation, as in the case of the Chernobyl accident; urged it to continue cooperating and exchanging information with other international organizations in its field; and welcomed its efforts to make its findings available to the wider public on its website.

16. She called for a discussion of the Scientific Committee's funding, which, since the 1990s, had not seen an increase in predictable resources commensurate with the growing interest in its scientific work and greater international concern about the whole issue of radiation protection. Furthermore, the issue of the possible enlargement of the membership of the Scientific Committee should be considered.

17. **Ms. Bubnovskaya** (Belarus) said that Belarus, the country that had suffered most from the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant 20 years earlier, had, in cooperation with foreign States and international governmental and non-governmental organizations, done considerable work on minimizing the effects of the accident. In the process, Belarusian specialists had collected unique data and acquired considerable practical experience, which they shared with a range of international organizations. Belarus felt, however, that it should also share its expertise with the Scientific Committee. Its intention of joining the Committee had been expressed in the outcome document of a conference held in Minsk in April 2006 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, which had called on the General Assembly to consider expanding the Committee's membership.

18. Her Government had set up a special interdepartmental working group to consider and resolve issues relating to Belarus's membership in the Committee. If its bid for membership was successful, Belarus could offer a highly qualified representative. In its 50 years of existence, the issue of the Committee's composition had been discussed only twice, the last time being in 1986. During that time, several States, particularly Belarus, had acquired specialized knowledge of the effects of atomic radiation. Moreover, an expanded membership would breathe new life into the Committee. It would be beneficial both for the new members and for the wider international community.

19. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba), commending the Scientific Committee for its excellent work over the past 50 years and the constant flow of information it provided to Member States, said that it was unjustifiable that tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, many of them ready for immediate use, should continue to exist, even though it was well-known that the harmful health effects of atomic radiation could last more than six decades. Cuba remained firmly committed to the total prohibition and elimination of all forms of nuclear weapons and completely opposed to the use of nuclear energy for military purposes.

20. Cuba had offered significant assistance to the people of Ukraine after the Chernobyl accident: it had for 16 years been conducting a rehabilitation programme for the victims, under which almost 20,000 Ukrainian children and accompanying family members had been brought to Cuba for medical treatment, and over 10,000 Ukrainians had been treated in a Crimean sanatorium staffed and advised by Cuban doctors. In the process, Cuba had gathered and published primary data on the impact of radiation exposure on children, which had been used by the Scientific Committee and by various United Nations specialized agencies.

21. The expert, objective work being done by the Scientific Committee was extremely important, and its collaboration with Member States and the relevant agencies of the United Nations system should be expanded. Applications of the Scientific Committee's findings would prove beneficial to human health and to the environment. Its financial difficulties were therefore a matter of concern, should they curtail its ability to work properly.

22. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation supported the Scientific Committee's request to UNEP to revise and strengthen its current financing, for it should be enabled to carry on with its useful, independent work. Member States, United Nations specialized agencies and other scientific institutions should themselves continue to provide the Special Committee with the high-quality information on which its studies depended.

23. The Syrian policy on nuclear technology was that it should be used for peaceful purposes to promote development and prosperity worldwide. It should be made available without discrimination or selectivity, but the constraints on access by developing countries were a matter of concern.

24. His Government had always called for the elimination of nuclear stockpiles to avert nuclear danger to mankind and to contain the risk of ionizing radiation. It had been one of the first States to call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, and that was still its goal.

25. In 2003, the Group of Arab States had sponsored a draft resolution to that effect in the Security Council, calling for collective monitoring of the Middle East region under the aegis of the United Nations, so as to strengthen multilateral agreements on disarmament. The Syrian Arab Republic itself had become a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1969 and had concluded an agreement with IAEA under its safeguards system. Israel was unique in its possession of nuclear weapons without any international supervision at all, and its refusal to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or implement the IAEA safeguards system was jeopardizing peace and security in the region and could set the stage for an environmental disaster on the order of Chernobyl. The people and the Governments of its neighbouring States had the right to know if Israeli power stations were secure and what activities were being carried out there, and the international community must put pressure on Israel to place its eight nuclear installations under IAEA monitoring.

26. Nuclear waste buried in the territories of developing countries and in the high seas posed a serious environmental risk of ionizing radiation. Israel's contention that it respected international disarmament agreements was undermined by the fact that it was known to be burying nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan. Greater international cooperation was needed to avert a deadly danger there.

27. **Mr. Yamamoto** (Japan), echoing the statements made by the Chairman of the Scientific Committee on the vital nature of its work and the reliance of Governments, international organizations and the scientific community on its authoritative findings and reports, observed that the Scientific Committee must be enabled to continue studying the effects of ionizing radiation in order to ensure that its use was not harmful to human health or the environment. UNEP should therefore increase the Committee's current funding and consider alternative funding mechanisms in order to allow it to discharge its mandate fully.

28. As a sponsor of the draft resolution just introduced, Japan hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

29. **Mr. Lynn** (Myanmar) said that two decades after the Chernobyl disaster, the adverse effects of that accident were still being felt by hundreds of thousands of people who had been forced to leave their homes to avoid exposure to radiation. Those effects underscored the need for all Member States to support the Scientific Committee in fulfilling its important mandate. His Government exercised the legitimate right to develop atomic energy for peaceful uses and had benefited from IAEA assistance in the fields of medicine, agriculture, engineering, technology and human resource development. The Agency had provided assistance through the Interregional Model Project on radiation protection and waste safety infrastructure. Furthermore, his Government was party to the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Asia and the Pacific Region and had ratified the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which sought to protect the region from environmental pollution and the hazards posed by radioactive waste and material. His delegation commended the Scientific Committee for its work and reiterated its assurance of continued cooperation.

30. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) said that his Government appreciated the work of the Scientific Committee in promoting wider knowledge and understanding of the risks, levels and effects of atomic and ionizing radiation on human beings and the environment. The Scientific Committee should be provided with the necessary resources to carry out its mandate and should open up its membership in order to benefit from the expertise of other States. Such an increase in membership would undoubtedly promote international cooperation. His Government hoped to become a member of the Scientific Committee and had the capacity to share and contribute expertise. In that connection, the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) was an independent regulatory body which dealt with nuclear and radioactive safety-related issues in accordance with the latest IAEA standards. His

delegation would be taking the necessary steps to become a member of the Scientific Committee.

31. **Mr. Desmoures** (Argentina) said that his Government and Argentine scientists had contributed to the work of the Scientific Committee since its establishment by the General Assembly in 1955. The protection regulations against the effects of radiation in Argentina had been based on the evaluations made by the Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee's conclusion that it was not necessary to change current risk estimates for cancer and the hereditary effects of radiation (A/61/46, para. 9) was particularly important because it confirmed that the protection and security regulations in force had been based on correct risk estimates.

32. His Government welcomed the fact that the Scientific Committee had agreed to conduct a thorough study on the detrimental effects attributed to low doses of radiation. Referring to paragraph 5 of the report, he noted that it was a problem generic to all radiation exposure and not limited to Chernobyl. His delegation urged the Scientific Committee to resolve that issue in a timely manner and also reiterated an earlier request to UNEP to continue to support the important work of the Scientific Committee, in accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 60/98.

33. **Mr. Capelle** (Marshall Islands) said that the effects of atomic radiation were a matter of the utmost concern to the people of the Marshall Islands due to the series of nuclear tests that had been conducted in those islands by the United States between 1946 and 1958. Many inhabitants continued to suffer from serious long-term health effects and others remained displaced from their homes due to ongoing contamination. The devastating social and environmental impact of atomic radiation in the Marshall Islands underscored the urgent need for scientific consensus regarding the effects of atomic radiation. Following the American nuclear tests, scientists had made conflicting assessments regarding both the degree of remaining radioactive contamination as well as safe levels of human exposure. For that reason, the objective research and authoritative conclusions of the Scientific Committee were invaluable. His Government requested support for the Marshall Islands Changed Circumstances Petition, which had been submitted to the United States Congress in 2000, and would also appreciate the assistance of the Scientific Committee and all Member States with experience in the restoration of environments contaminated by radiation.

34. Faced with conflicting conclusions, it was difficult for his Government to establish policies on public health, environmental remediation and possible resettlement. He expressed the hope that the Scientific Committee would be provided an adequate operating budget and the kind of administrative and technical support that would enable it to give the Marshall Islands specific recommendations on the steps that needed to be taken. In that connection, his delegation strongly supported the resolution sponsored by Australia, which urged UNEP to strengthen the Scientific Committee's funding. Regrettably, it was not the first time the Marshall Islands had addressed that issue.

35. **Mr. Datsenko** (Ukraine) said that the Scientific Committee had been involved in the evaluation of radiation exposure from the Chernobyl accident from an early stage. Despite the conclusion that the vast majority of people would not suffer from the effects of radiation, there was still a heated scientific discussion on the number of deaths that could be traced to that accident. It was true that there had been a dramatic increase in thyroid cancer among people who had been exposed to radiation at a young age. However, there was no demonstrable rise in the incidence of solid cancers or leukaemia. It was significant that the Scientific Committee had extended its research on the collective doses of radiation to all parts of the world and had not limited that work to the Chernobyl area, and that it had introduced the new concept of the effect of chronic low-level exposure on future generations.

36. His delegation was grateful to the national and international organizations that had participated in the work of the Chernobyl Forum, which had been launched to review radiation-induced effects and to contribute to the Organization's strategy for recovery. The international conference entitled "Twenty Years after the Chernobyl Accident: Future Outlook", held in Ukraine in April, had drawn on international experience relating to radiation protection of the population and emergency workers.

37. His Government expected to continue its cooperation with the Scientific Committee and all parties concerned to counter the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and to promote economic recovery in the majority of the territories surrounding

Chernobyl, which had become safe for resettlement. His Government fully supported the Scientific Committee's plans to study the risks of radon, the cancer and non-cancer effects of radiation and cellular responses to radiation exposure. The funding of the Scientific Committee should be re-examined to ensure that it had the staffing levels and resources required to meet its considerable responsibilities.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.18

General Assembly
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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 18th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 30 October 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 30: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

Agenda item 29: Effects of atomic radiation (*continued*)

Agenda item 110: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Agenda item 28: University for Peace

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06-59101 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 30: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/C.4/61/L.2/Rev.1 and L.3/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.2/Rev.1 on the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response

1. **Mr. Chibaeff** (France), introducing the draft resolutions under agenda item 30, said, with regard to draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.2/Rev.1, that after consultations in the working group, it had been agreed that the clause "and should not result in an increase of the total regular budget of the United Nations" should be added at the end of paragraph 7.

2. **Mr. Zhang** (Secretary of the Committee), speaking under rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, reiterated that, in keeping with paragraph 162 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/61/20), the programme to be established under paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.2/Rev.1 should not result in an increase of the total regular budget of the United Nations.

3. It was understood that the programme would take into account the results of the study done by the ad hoc expert group established by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/AC.105/873) and that the Office for Outer Space Affairs would also refer to that study in developing a workplan requested in paragraph 13. The 2007 activities outlined in paragraphs 14 to 16 would, it should be noted, be implemented by the Office with resources from voluntary contributions and a reorientation of the Office's support priorities, namely, four work-months by one P-4 staff member and the organization of a disaster-management workshop.

4. Should additional resources be required to meet the activities to be conducted under the detailed workplan, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would be informed at its fiftieth session of the estimated cost of such resources, and the associated resource requirements for implementation of the programme for the biennium 2008-2009 would be considered in accordance with established budgetary procedures.

5. Accordingly, adoption of draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.2/Rev.1 would not give rise to additional appropriations for the biennium 2006-2007.

6. Finally he drew attention to the provisions of section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, in which the Assembly had reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters and had reaffirmed also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

7. *Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.2/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.3/Rev.1 on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

8. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that the draft resolution would have no programme budget implications.

9. *Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.3/Rev.1 was adopted without a vote.*

Agenda item 29: Effects of atomic radiation (*continued*) (A/61/46 and Corr.1; A/C.4/61/L.7)

10. **Mr. Alampadan** (India) said that the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had immense implications for the health and well-being of thousands and for the environment and non-human biota. Cancer was the main concern among radiation-induced health effects, although — as also in the case of congenital malformations — other factors entered in. Moreover, as recent studies in India and China had indicated, it was possible that the estimations of risk following radiation exposure had been substantially inflated, especially with regard to the influence of low-dose radiation on the incidence of cancer.

11. The same could be said of the linear no-threshold concept of radiation dose response, which had been the cornerstone of all international regulation of radiation exposure limits for nuclear power plants and other nuclear installations. Numerous studies on low-dose radiation effects questioned the scientific accuracy of that accepted concept. The stringent requirements of the current regulatory regime imposed huge and unreasonable costs on the countries harnessing nuclear power to generate electricity; and given the

inevitability of nuclear energy as a viable economical and environmentally friendly option, such data needed to be carefully analysed.

12. Some uninformed agencies and individuals had used the Scientific Committee's estimates of risk coefficients and collective doses to which a population was exposed to predict the likely number of deaths following accidental radiation exposure, such an approach was scientifically incorrect and would result in overestimation and spread panic.

13. Medical radiation exposure was a major component of man-made exposures, and there was a need to collect reliable information on the various radio-diagnostic and therapeutic procedures used by different countries. India hoped that the Scientific Committee would present that information as a scientific annex to its next report. Two of the scientific annexes to the Committee's current report, to which India had contributed significantly, had for the first time made an epidemiological evaluation of cardiovascular disease and other non-cancer diseases following radiation exposure and had analysed the effects of ionizing radiation on the immune system. The report had also made a useful assessment of the effects of radon exposure, the risk of which could now be reliably estimated.

14. The United Nations Environment Programme must accord utmost priority to the highly scientific work being done by the Scientific Committee. For a number of years, it had suffered from a lack of adequate resources. India strongly supported a substantially increased budget for the 2008-2009 biennium, in accordance with the position taken by the General Assembly in all its recent resolutions on the effects of atomic radiation.

Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.7 on the effects of atomic radiation

15. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications and that Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Norway, Slovakia and the United States had joined the sponsors.

16. *Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.7 was adopted without a vote.*

17. **Mr. Romeu** (Spain), speaking in explanation of position after the decision, said that it was of the utmost importance to consider the question of expanding the membership of the Scientific Committee. Considerable time had elapsed since that had last been done, and some countries — Spain among them — had made great scientific progress in the field in the interim. He announced that Spain hoped to join the Scientific Committee.

Agenda item 110: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

18. **The Chairman** drew attention to the draft provisional guideline: approximate dates for the consideration of items by the Special Political Committee (Fourth Committee) at the sixty-second session which had just been circulated. He said that it would be annexed to the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

Agenda item 28: University for Peace (A/61/285)

19. **Ms. Marton-Lefevre** (Rector, University for Peace) said that the University's five-year revitalization programme had been completed in 2005 and that external evaluations, led by three teams from Canada, Germany and Finland, had found the revitalization programme had been successful.

20. The University had launched a rigorous new academic programme, including eight master's degree programmes. Short courses had been created for those not pursuing master's degrees. The University for Peace system planned to focus efforts not only on education at the University's Costa Rica campus, but also on global education through partnership arrangements and joint programmes with universities all over the world. Links with the United Nations system were also being enhanced.

21. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the University could be a useful tool in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and it should consider establishing satellite campuses in willing host countries. He wondered whether the University planned to cooperate with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Dialogue among Civilizations.

22. **Ms. Marton-Lefevre** (Rector, University for Peace) said that while the University for Peace system had no plans to establish new campuses, it was open to working with existing universities upon invitation. The University and the Peacebuilding Commission were discussing opportunities for training Peacebuilding

Commission staff and for employment of University alumni. The University was also in contact with the Dialogue among Civilizations.

23. **Mr. Adeyemi** (Nigeria) wondered whether the University limited its collaboration to universities. He noted that a number of national organizations were working on related issues and collaboration with them could be mutually beneficial.

24. **Ms. Marton-Lefevre** (Rector, University for Peace) said that while the University strove to respect its position as an academic institution, it did work with non-governmental organizations and other national organizations at the regional level.

Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.8: University for Peace

25. **Mr. Urbina** (Costa Rica) said that his delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/285), which outlined what had been done over the past five years to revitalize the University. The University had established programmes in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and was working on establishing an international centre of the University in Canada, thereby demonstrating its commitment to global education. In order to continue its work the University would need increased political and financial support.

26. Introducing draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.8, which was an updated version of the one adopted the previous year, he said that Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Fiji, Finland, Greece, Panama and the Russian Federation had become sponsors of the draft resolution. He called on the international community and individuals to continue to contribute to University programmes and budget, and to demonstrate support for peace education by acceding to the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace. He hoped the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

27. **The Chairman** after informing the Committee that the draft resolution had no financial implications, said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt it.

28. *Draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.8 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.19

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Summary record of the 19th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 31 October 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)
later: Mr. Andersson (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Sweden)

Contents

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

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06-59366 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
(A/61/13, A/61/347, A/61/358, A/61/278 and A/61/172)

1. **Ms. Koning Abu Zayd** (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)), introducing the annual report of UNRWA (A/61/13), said that, in an effort to bring it in line with the budgeting and planning cycle, the report used the calendar year 2005 as its reporting period. It focused on outcomes reflecting the Agency's efforts to become more results-oriented. The Agency provided educational, health and social services to the Palestine refugees in five fields of operation: Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and Gaza. It also administered emergency programmes in times of acute crises. The education programme was the Agency's largest and provided elementary education and vocational training programmes. Despite funding difficulties, the Agency strove to achieve an optimum learning environment in and improve the quality of its schools. While the Agency's 125 health centres had been evaluated as cost-effective by the World Health Organization, the increase in chronic diseases that were expensive to treat indicated a growing need for care that was beyond the capabilities of the Agency. Its relief and social services programme had provided food, cash, one-time assistance and temporary jobs for refugees in 2005. The microfinance and microenterprise programme had provided nearly $16 million in loans in 2005, down from 2004 owing to the economic impact of armed conflict and the closure regime in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

2. The Syrian Government had facilitated the construction of 100 new housing units for refugees through the Neirab and Ein al-Tal project, including a water supply network. It had also provided refuge to a group of Palestinians fleeing persecution in Iraq. She encouraged other regional Governments to do the same for the Palestinians stranded at the Al-Tanf border between Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Palestine refugees enjoyed a range of rights, privileges and freedoms in Jordan, which had extended collaboration to include improved sanitation, infrastructure and living conditions in the Talbiyeh and Baqa'a camps, and had signed an agreement to grant needy refugees improved access to affordable hospital services.

3. The Agency's staff in Lebanon had proved invaluable during the most recent conflict by maintaining health services, delivering food and other assistance to those unable to reach distribution centres and helping to house the displaced throughout the conflict. The intensity of the conflict had put the lives of humanitarian and relief workers at serious risk and Agency staff had performed admirably. Staff in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic had collaborated with other United Nations agencies to facilitate the evacuation of those fleeing the conflict and their return to Lebanon after the cessation of hostilities.

4. The conflict had aggravated the chronic poverty of the majority of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, as unexploded ordnance, such as anti-personnel cluster bombs, made it impossible for them to resume farming activities. The Agency was grateful to the Government of Lebanon for providing for refugee camp funding of $3 million in its early recovery plan, underlining the Government's commitment to ensuring that improvement of the refugees' living conditions became an integral part of the reconstruction of Lebanon. She welcomed the Lebanese Government's intention to grant Palestine refugees wider enjoyment of their rights. Her Agency looked forward to working with the Government to that end.

5. The Occupied Palestinian Territory had become a byword for violations of international law and the hardship and deprivation of the Palestine refugee experience. Since January 2006, the cumulative impact of the Israeli occupation of over 40 years had been further heightened by unprecedented levels of political crisis and internal armed conflict, coupled with a de facto sanctions regime against Palestinian residents. Between July and September 2006, Gaza had sustained 5,300 artillery shells and over 292 air strikes. In the same period, 298 Palestinians, including 49 children, had been killed in Gaza and 1,000 had been injured, many of them multiple amputees. Two Israelis had been killed and 28 had been injured from 424 home-made rockets fired into Israel. There was an apparent willingness to use more devastating methods of warfare regardless of their impact on civilian lives, while the restraining influences of international law were ignored by the combatants.

6. Living conditions had been in steep decline for six years, and material hardship had reached unprecedented levels. Recent surveys showed that nearly 87 per cent of Gaza and 56 per cent of West

Bank residents lived below the poverty line and could not support themselves without international assistance. Widespread unemployment had caused a dramatic increase in demand for the Agency's emergency relief services. Severe movement restrictions also adversely affected people. Indeed, West Bank commerce had been reduced to a trickle by the barrier around Jerusalem, the tri-sectioning of the West Bank and a draconian permit regime limiting the movement of people and goods. Internal checkpoints and fixed barriers in the West Bank had increased by 40 per cent in 12 months and travel to and from Jerusalem was nearly impossible for most Palestinians. As most of its staff in the occupied territory was Palestinian, the situation had a direct negative impact on the Agency's West Bank operations.

7. Settler violence had forced half the Palestinian population in the downtown area of Hebron to flee and settlement expansion continued through land expropriations, house demolitions and daily military incursions. The ongoing construction of the separation barrier in the West Bank was a concern, although its impact and the movement controls it implied for Palestinians seemed to be fading from international attention. Law and order was deteriorating, community cohesion was unravelling and the youth were increasingly radicalized. None of those trends were in the interest of the region or the international community. Nor were they compatible with the vision of a stable, prosperous and peaceful Palestinian State living in peace with its neighbours and taking its proper place in the community of nations.

8. On institutional matters, including management reform, a reinvigorated Advisory Commission, staff security and funding, the Agency had begun a long-term process of far-reaching reforms. The Advisory Commission had responded positively to an organizational development plan and the Agency was pleased with progress made in human resources management, programme development and streamlining of organizational processes. Management reforms were vital for UNRWA to improve its overall performance. In that context, the role and membership of the Advisory Commission had been enhanced and expanded. It now had 24 members and observers.

9. With regard to staff security, she noted that UNRWA Palestinian staff were the only United Nations employees in Israel and the Occupied Territory who did not receive hazard pay and reiterated her appeal on the need to address that anomalous situation. Staff security was also affected during the Lebanon conflict; since 2005 most international staff in the Gaza headquarters had been relocated to Amman and Jerusalem, prolonging administrative processes.

10. While UNRWA was grateful for the generosity of donor States, it was often compelled by inadequate funding to scale down its services; that in turn curtailed or denied the fundamental rights of refugees. The Agency was currently facing a deficit of some $107 million, since it had raised $138 million out of the $171 million needed for its 2006 revised emergency appeal. While the situation was dismal, the challenges were surmountable. Political will and willingness to compromise should be cultivated in order to achieve a peaceful resolution and a better future.

11. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran), noting that the separation wall was a sign of injustice and of the inactivity of the international community, wondered what its negative economic impact had been.

12. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the separation wall built by Israel had negative consequences, including creating more refugees, as noted by B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. That information increased the scientific value of the report, which did not discuss the wall's consequences in great detail.

13. **Ms. Abu Zayd** (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), said that, while she had no figures on the negative economic impact of the wall, there were organizations that reported on them. UNRWA focused on the social effects of the wall, including family separations and unemployment. Landowners could not reach their land in the seam zone between the wall and the Green Line, and there were problems with respect to their land titles. The completion of the Jerusalem envelope had led to family separation, increased unemployment, inaccessibility of medical services and reduced access to education. The economic cost to the Agency was that it had had to establish mobile clinics in addition to primary care facilities.

14. **Mr. Gidor** (Israel) wondered why the report included information on 2006, when it covered calendar year 2005. If it covered 2006, it should include the Syrian assassination of the Lebanese Prime

Minister and the Islamic Republic of Iran's support of Hezbollah. Furthermore, the report covered all Palestinians, not only Palestinian refugees. The most effective contribution that the Agency could make to solving the crisis would be to stay within its mandate.

15. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the accusation that the Syrian Arab Republic had been involved in the assassination of Mr. Hariri was false. It was important to ask who benefited from that crime and whether in fact the Government of Israel had benefited from it. Furthermore, it seemed that the Israeli delegation was trying to politicize humanitarian questions.

16. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Israeli delegation was diverting attention from the main issues, including the catastrophe in the Middle East and the negative impact of the separation wall. That wall had affected the Palestinians economically and the Agency should step up efforts to support the Palestinians, with a view to helping them to become self-sufficient.

17. **Ms. Abu Zayd** (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) said that the Advisory Commission had agreed to change the format of the report so that it covered the calendar year. However, during the presentation of that report it had also been necessary to refer to the serious events that had occurred in 2006. The Agency had avoided engaging in peacebuilding activities and had focused on its primary role of providing humanitarian support and presenting the facts to the political actors. More emergency work needed to be done owing to the economic decline; conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were worse than during the previous six years. The Agency urged all political actors to mobilize the political will to address that emergency situation.

18. **Mr. Sow** (Senegal), noting that the report was detailed and well researched, said that it was important to refer to the living conditions of Palestinians during the war and the social consequences of that war.

19. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that Lebanon, which had been a victim of State terrorism because it had been occupied by Israel since 1978, condemned all forms of terrorism. Hezbollah did not exist before 1978, when the first Israeli invasion had occurred. Hezbollah did not exist before 1982, when the Israeli invasion had reached Beirut. Hezbollah was a popular reaction against the Israeli invasion. His delegation hoped that a constructive dialogue could be established in the future.

20. **Mr. Ali** (Sudan) said that the Agency deserved every support because it had been working in extremely difficult conditions.

21. **Ms. Enge** (Norway) introduced the report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/61/347) and highlighted some of the Working Group's concluding remarks, including its concern over the large funding gap for the UNRWA regular budget in 2006, its appeal to the international community to fully fund both the budget for the biennium 2006-2007 and the Agency's revised emergency appeal for 2006. The Working Group also called for the early and complete fulfilment of pledges and other commitments to the Agency, in particular the reimbursement of value-added tax by the Palestine Authority and port and related charges by the Israeli Government and expressed the hope that the international support for the Agency, embodied in the resolutions adopted each year by the General Assembly, would be translated into increased support to ensure the continuation of the Agency on a sound financial basis.

22. *Mr. Andersson (Sweden), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

23. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that the Agency's annual report served as a reminder of the harsh living conditions of the Palestine refugees and of the crucial need for the assistance provided by UNRWA. The Agency had defended the rights of the Palestine refugees who had been denied their natural and inherent right to return to their land. The General Assembly had affirmed the right of the Palestine refugees to return to their homes in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948 and the international community had continuously reaffirmed that right since that date. The resolution of the plight of the refugees remained one of the highest priorities for Palestine. In addition to the collective right of the Palestine refugees to return to their land, it was also necessary to recall the individual right to private ownership, including of land. As documented in the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP), the Palestine refugees were the owners of 5.5 million dunams of

land and that ownership must be recognized by the Government of Israel and be included in any fair settlement of the refugee problem. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had been displaced from their homes in 1967 and continued to endure difficult conditions. Their right to return had been affirmed by Security Council resolution 237 (1967) and had been annually reaffirmed by the international community. A mechanism for the return of those displaced persons had been established by means of the Declaration of Principles of 1993 but that mechanism had not been implemented and the Government of Israel continued to disregard United Nations resolutions.

24. During the reporting period, UNRWA had provided essential educational, health, relief and social services to Palestine refugees throughout Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and had continued to carry out its innovative micro-finance and enterprise programme. However, the grave deterioration of the political, socio-economic and security situation had adversely affected the already dire situation of the refugees and had affected the work of the Agency. The Government of Israel was responsible for that situation and must be held accountable for its actions. Hundreds of refugee families had suffered as a result of Israel's intensified military aggression. In addition to the escalation of the conflict, the situation of the refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, had further deteriorated as a result of other Israeli practices, including severe restrictions on the freedom of movement of persons and goods under the closure regime, the suspension of international assistance, Israel's withholding of tax revenues and the continued construction of the wall. Those unlawful actions had devastated the Palestinian economy and had affected the functioning of Palestinian society in all areas. UNRWA had further expanded its emergency operations to respond to the increase in poverty, unemployment, food insecurity and instability.

25. The closures and restrictions imposed by the Government of Israel had seriously undermined the Agency's operations and that hindrance of the Agency's humanitarian work represented a blatant violation of international law. The international community must call on the Government of Israel to comply with legal obligations and immediately lift all restrictions on the movement of the Agency's staff, vehicles and supplies. In the context of those difficulties and challenges, the Agency had been resourceful and innovative and its operations support programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been instrumental in facilitating the access of UNRWA staff and vehicles, in reporting on the humanitarian crisis and in providing a measure of protection to the Palestine refugees. He encouraged the Governments of Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic to continue their cooperation with the Agency and appreciated their efforts as members of the Advisory Commission and as host countries.

26. The organizational reform measures had modernized and strengthened the Agency's management and had enhanced its use of funding and its ability to effectively address the needs of the refugees. He commended the Agency's medium-term plan for 2005-2009 and its efforts to move towards needs-based planning, and urged all donors to increase their contributions and to respond to emergency appeals. Until a just and lasting solution was found to the Palestine refugee problem, the international community's unwavering support of the Agency was crucial for the welfare and stability of the refugees and the region as a whole.

27. **Mr. Almansoori** (United Arab Emirates) observed that the responsibilities of UNRWA had increased as the humanitarian, social and economic repercussions of the continuing Israeli occupation, military aggression, blockades and destruction in the Palestinian Territories had escalated. Yet, deplorably, Israel was putting obstacles in the way of the Agency's work, disrupting most of the programmes providing essential services to the Palestinian refugees, and seriously breaching its own international obligation to respect the privileges and immunities of United Nations staff in general and Agency staff in particular. The result was unemployment, poverty, illness and hunger among the refugees themselves.

28. It was the responsibility of the United Nations to find a just solution for the Palestinian refugees that included the voluntary right of return to their homelands and compensation for the material and moral damages they had endured. His Government called upon donor countries and the international financial institutions to give more generously to UNRWA to enable it to maintain and expand its humanitarian services. It also called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to stop attacking and blockading the

Palestinian refugee camps and hampering UNRWA and other United Nations agencies in their humanitarian work.

29. The Palestinian refugee problem could not be resolved without a comprehensive, just and lasting solution in the Middle East that included the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

30. **Mr. Adaileh** (Jordan), commending the outstanding work being done by UNRWA and the excellent report it had produced, observed that the massive presence of Palestinian refugees in camps in Jordanian territory had a major impact on the social, political and demographic conditions in his country. The Palestine refugee question demanded resolution, and it must be resolved on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and international agreements, especially General Assembly resolution 194 (III) upholding the right of return and the right of compensation.

31. Despite its own annual budget deficits and its limited funds, Jordan spent US$ 460 million annually to provide educational, health and social services and security for the refugees living in 13 different camps in the country, and it sometimes contributed financially to UNRWA programmes when the Agency would otherwise not keep pace with the needs of the growing camp populations or when the Agency's funds did not suffice. It should be noted that UNRWA services in Jordan represented 20 per cent of its total budget, despite the fact that over 42 per cent of all Palestinian refugees lived in Jordan. In 1999 Jordan had adopted a national plan targeting the poor areas in its society, including the refugee camps, entailing a total expenditure of $50 million.

32. Any reduction in UNRWA services would be dangerous because they guaranteed a minimum decent living standard for Palestine refugees. The needs of all the refugees had to be addressed equitably, irrespective of their geographical location or living conditions.

33. Israel must facilitate the movement of UNRWA staff and vehicles in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, rather than, as the report indicated, severely hampering them, for that made the lives of the refugees more difficult and put a further burden on the Agency's already overstretched budget.

34. Jordan supported a one-time expansion in the membership of the Advisory Commission and believed that any application for membership in the expanded Commission should be examined on its merits.

35. Jordan paid tribute to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for her efforts to make the Agency more effective and improve the quality of its programmes, an objective sought by all Member States, especially the donor countries. It also hoped that the Agency's financial status would improve, allowing it to provide better services to the refugees who relied on them.

36. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) expressed concern about the deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Lebanon that had required an expansion of UNRWA emergency operations there and necessitated even more donor support. The imposition of sanctions following the election of the new Government in Palestine had only compounded the problem, and they should be lifted.

37. Israel's 2005 disengagement from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and the circulation of persons permitted through one crossing point has indeed been a positive development, but the agreed goal remained unrestricted movement of goods, services and people to and from those areas, the only way in which their economy could be revived.

38. Israel's restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNRWA personnel and vehicles were particularly troubling and must be removed, for they were hampering the provision of basic humanitarian services to Palestine refugees, a situation exacerbated by the continued construction of the separation wall.

39. The Agency had taken laudable steps to cope with the evolving complexities by adopting its medium-term plan and a three-year blueprint for streamlining its operational management, in order to move towards needs-based strategic planning, effective monitoring and modernized programme cycle management, resource mobilization and public information.

40. Bangladesh would be happy to share its recognized expertise in microfinance and microenterprise with the Agency, which had begun using those tools to alleviate poverty and promote economic development, most successfully so far in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The international community must not allow the intrepid UNRWA

personnel to shoulder the burden alone as they worked in life-threatening conditions.

41. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba) said that the continuing human rights violations and war crimes Israel was committing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had caused the situation there to deteriorate tragically. Its purported withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and dismantling of settlements had not ended its genocidal policies, for it was still in control of the Gaza airspace and borders, and it kept crossings closed to the population of Gaza. Israel's unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory threatened prospects for a negotiated two-State solution.

42. Extrajudicial executions, border closings, selective assassinations, arbitrary arrests, torture of detainees, destruction of homes and infrastructure, indiscriminate use of force and psychological terrorism had become standard operating procedures in Palestine, and must be condemned. The freezing of bank transactions by Israel and the major donors earlier in 2006 had, moreover, made it impossible for the Palestinian Authority to pay salaries and provide essential services.

43. It was in the midst of such bleak conditions that UNRWA had to do its work, providing essential emergency services despite unacceptable Israeli restrictions on its freedom of movement. Cuba commended the Agency for its budgetary and fiscal responsibility, but deplored its inability to use all the funds available for programmed activities because of security restrictions in Gaza and the West Bank. Israel must not be allowed to flout international conventions and agreements regarding the protection and security of UNRWA personnel.

44. Cuba continued to support a resumption of the peace process leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East and ensuring the Palestinian people's right to an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

45. **Mr. Al-Otaibi** (Kuwait) said that UNRWA, which was doing its utmost to do whatever was needed, must be enabled by the international community to continue operating until the Palestine refugee question had been dealt with. The major financial difficulties it was facing were an added obstacle to its provision of services, without discrimination, in the five areas in which it operated.

46. UNRWA had provided welcome services in the fields of health and education to the Palestine refugees. Kuwait had itself offered material assistance to the refugees: it had helped fund many infrastructure projects conducted by other international agencies; and in the past year, because of its faith in the justice of the Palestinian cause, it had added an additional $1-million contribution to its $1.5-million voluntary contribution to the Agency's regular budget, in order to meet the humanitarian needs of the refugees and alleviate their suffering. Kuwait would stand by all its financial commitments.

47. Israel had long pursued its policy of domination by repeatedly invading the territory under the control of the Palestinian Authority, in total contradiction to the elementary principles of international affairs and in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It justified its actions by its need to protect its national security and end the violence against it, but its own actions only served to compound the violence.

48. It was a matter of great concern that the Israeli Government and its military were raising constant obstacles to the normal operation of UNRWA, which meant that needed services were not being provided to the Palestine refugees. Its staff were clearly entitled to the same privileges and immunities as were all other United Nations staff. The Agency, it should be noted, nevertheless continued to work indomitably under such difficult conditions.

49. The legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people must be respected, as required by United Nations resolutions. Israel had to respect the established framework, namely, the land-for-peace principle and the Quartet road map, that would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. In the meantime, the Commissioner-General and the staff of UNRWA deserved gratitude as they assisted the Palestinian people until a final satisfactory solution was found.

50. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that 58 years after the worst catastrophe ever to beset the Middle East, there was not even a ray of hope that the suffering of the Palestinian people would soon end or that the Palestinian refugees would return to their homes as called for by General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Israel, in total disregard of international law and the International Bill of Human Rights, continued to prevent those refugees from returning to their cities

and villages and was bringing alien settlers to take over their homes. Currently, Palestine refugees numbered 5 million, the single largest group of refugees in the world.

51. Conditions for refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza, which had been turned into a killing field, had worsened after the recent Israeli attacks. Israel had detained members of both the democratically elected Palestinian Government and Parliament. Its claims that the unilateral withdrawal of settlers and troops had ended the occupation of Gaza were inaccurate. In fact, the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 (A/61/470), found that the International Court of Justice, the Security Council and even the High Court of Israel itself had confirmed that the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained occupied.

52. Accordingly, Israeli actions in those Territories constituted war crimes under article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and article 85 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. Furthermore, Israel had violated the prohibition on collective punishment of an occupied people contained in article 33 of the Geneva Convention.

53. Even UNRWA had felt the effect of Israel's savage policies. The Israeli army had raided and bombarded the Agency's buildings and schools several times, killing nine students and injuring 20 others. Such actions constituted violations of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the 1967 exchange of letters between the Agency and the Government of Israel (the Comay-Michelmore Agreement) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. Israel had also refused to compensate UNRWA for damages.

54. Israeli disengagement from Gaza had not resulted in economic revitalization. In fact, it had merely increased the number of obstacles faced by Palestinians who used the commercial crossings in Gaza; there were now more than 400 checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, territories with a combined surface area not greater than 5,000 square kilometres. Israel had made it difficult even for UNRWA employees to use the Erez and Rafah crossings.

55. The Syrian Arab Republic, which had made great financial sacrifices to provide assistance and support to the Palestinians who had taken refuge in its territory, held the view that the question of Palestine refugees was an international responsibility. It was important for UNRWA to continue operating until its mandate had been fulfilled. In that regard, he called on the international community to respond to the urgent appeals of the Commissioner-General.

56. It was a matter of serious concern that UNRWA staff, unlike all other United Nations staff in similar circumstances, did not receive hazard pay despite the fact that a number of them had been killed by occupation forces. Moreover, the Organization should hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable and legally liable for those heinous acts.

57. Fifty-seven years, nearly the entire existence of the United Nations, had gone by since the General Assembly adopted resolution 194 (III). Israel, through its aggressive and irresponsible actions and use of military force, had demonstrated beyond any doubt that it was still not ready for a just and comprehensive peace in the region. The time had come for the international community to put pressure on Israel to end its occupation of Arab lands and to implement internationally binding decisions and resolutions.

58. **Mr. Huimasalo** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, and the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia, observed that UNRWA staff and management were performing their crucial work under especially difficult, often very dangerous, circumstances. The Governments of Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic should also be commended for having long provided assistance to Palestinian refugees. The European Union itself was the largest contributor to the Agency, providing more than half of its income.

59. The expanded Advisory Commission had made commendable efforts to help the Agency develop a better strategic response to the enormous challenges facing it, and the ongoing organizational development was a matter of great interest. The new reporting period the Agency had set would help it to devise more effective programming.

60. Over one quarter of the Palestine refugees resided in the Lebanese camps that had been most directly affected during the armed conflict of the past summer,

and even greater hardship had been caused by the influx of Lebanese civilians seeking refuge in large numbers. To all of them, nevertheless, the Agency had extended its help. The European Union was pleased to note that the Lebanese Government's recovery plan included the improvement of refugee living conditions under UNRWA projects as part of its reconstruction and rebuilding in southern Lebanon.

61. The deterioration of the humanitarian, economic and financial situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories was a matter of serious concern. The closure system was a primary cause of the humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where access to basic services was restricted, communities were divided and the viability of the economy was undermined. Israel must guarantee full freedom of movement and access, as it had agreed. Both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority, moreover, must ensure that Palestinian refugee children received special protection. Israel was urged especially to guarantee full and secure access to the Occupied Territories for all diplomatic and humanitarian personnel and goods performing essential services, as required by international humanitarian law and by the road map.

62. The preponderance of residents in Gaza and the West Bank were unable to support themselves, and were totally dependent on outside international assistance. That made the Agency's role even more important during the current crisis. The European Union's Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) was bringing in badly needed donor support, and it encouraged other donors to make use of the Mechanism to help close the financing gap in the Agency's emergency programmes. Israel, moreover, should immediately resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues, preferably also via the Mechanism, to spur the Palestinian economy.

63. The European Union called on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to violence and terrorist activities, including the firing of rockets on Israeli territory. While recognizing Israel's right to protect its citizens against terrorist attacks, it was deeply concerned over the continued Israeli operations in the Palestinian Territories and the ensuing loss of life. It supported President Abbas and called on all Palestinian factions to join in his efforts to form a national unity government with a platform reflecting Quartet principles. There must be restraint on all sides.

64. Reversing policy, Israel should freeze all settlement activity and dismantle outposts erected since March 2001, and should end land confiscation and the construction of the separation barrier on Palestinian land, all of which threatened to render the two-State solution physically impossible — a solution to which the European Union remained committed. It would not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties. The overriding goal must be to relaunch negotiations on the basis of the road map. The Palestine refugee issue could only be resolved as part of a permanent status agreement, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions. Until then, the services provided by UNRWA remained essential to ensure Palestine refugees in the Middle East a decent life.

65. **Mr. Kabtani** (Tunisia) expressed his country's gratitude to the UNRWA team for the efforts it was making under such difficult conditions to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestine refugees. The assistance being provided to the refugees by the countries hosting them, and the financial burden they were bearing, should be recognized, as should the donor contributions that allowed UNRWA to continue to operate.

66. The Agency's role was crucial, for the services it provided were basic. It was important for it to consolidate them to reflect the changing needs of the Palestine refugees until they were able to exercise their legitimate rights. Tunisia therefore called upon the international community, especially the donor countries, to support the growing numbers of refugees, especially as their living conditions deteriorated.

67. The grave situation of the Palestine refugees was directly related to the Israeli blockades, which were creating a humanitarian catastrophe in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and were having an adverse impact on UNRWA services. The report gave the facts of the Israeli occupation and Israel's targeting of UNRWA staff and facilities, which ran counter to international humanitarian law and to conventions signed by Israel. It was urgent to remove all restrictions on the travel of UNRWA staff and on its services to the refugees. Tunisia provided material support to the refugees, in view of their legitimate rights under resolution 194 (III) and in the interests of peace and security in the region.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.20

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 20th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 1 November 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*)

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06-59603 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/61/13, A/61/347, A/61/358, A/61/278 and A/61/172)

1. **Mr. Hoang Chi Trung** (Viet Nam) said that his delegation welcomed the Agency's excellent work and efforts to overcome obstacles and provide its regular programmes to Palestine refugees, in particular education for Palestinian children. His delegation urged the United Nations to increase support for the Agency's work and hoped that the Agency would continue to work closely with the United Nations system.

2. His delegation was deeply concerned about the deterioration of the humanitarian condition in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. More than half the Palestinian population was unable to meet its food requirements without international aid, and the decline in security and the economic situation due to persistent violence was aggravating already harsh conditions. his delegation called on Israel to cease all military operations and to lift curfews and closures it had imposed in the area. Israeli limitations on the movement of Agency staff and vehicles were a matter of grave concern. The Agency's privileges and immunities must be respected and obstacles to its work must be removed.

3. **Ms. Spoljaric** (Switzerland) said that the annual report of the Commissioner-General was excellent and her letter of transmittal would provide context for the Committee's debate. Her delegation commended Agency activities, particularly in view of the severe political and operational obstacles it faced, and welcomed the contributions of the host countries.

4. Her delegation was deeply concerned about the marked deterioration in the socio-economic situation of Palestine refugees in the Occupied Territory. The Agency's efforts to extend its emergency assistance programme and to cooperate with other humanitarian organizations had been commendable, as was its willingness to share the results of its external evaluation of the emergency assistance programme before the end of 2006.

5. Her delegation called on the authorities in the Agency's fields of operation to ensure its safe access to those under its mandate, in particular in the Occupied Territory. It called on Israeli authorities to immediately reimburse the Agency for taxes levied at the Karni crossing point and to exempt the Agency from such taxes as they were not compatible with the Israeli Government's international commitments.

6. The constructive work begun in the revitalized Advisory Commission was proof of renewed international solidarity on behalf of Palestine refugees. Her delegation welcomed the Agency's participatory approach to management, which included its most precious asset, its staff.

7. **Mr. Endo** (Japan) said that his Government considered assistance to Palestine refugees and non-refugees an important component of its efforts to advance the Middle East peace process. Japan had contributed nearly $1 billion to the Palestinian people, 30 per cent of which was administered by the Agency, an important partner for promoting security. In July 2006, Japan had contributed approximately $25 million to improve health care and create jobs, largely through the Agency. In January 2006, Japan had contributed millions to the support of Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza. As a major donor, Japan was interested in Agency reform and looked forward to seeing greater transparency in its management and increased accountability and efficiency in its utilization of resources. Reform would build confidence between the Agency and donor countries.

8. Important as international assistance was to improving the humanitarian situation of Palestine refugees, the establishment of a lasting peace was even more important. Most Palestinians and Israelis supported the peace process; therefore their political leaders should pursue peace. His delegation hoped that Palestinians would overcome their differences of opinions and that the Palestinian Authority would opt to pursue peace through dialogue — a move which should win the immediate support of the international community. His delegation also hoped that Israel would do its part to end the current impasse. For its part, Japan had proposed the creation of a "corridor for peace and prosperity" to create regional cooperation in the Jordan Rift Valley. It was also initiating official consultations with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan.

9. **Mr. Bilgen** (Turkey) said that the political conflict could not be settled by violence or military measures, and that neither unilateral action nor

indifference to the suffering of others would bring about lasting peace. His delegation hoped that the Palestinian people would ensure the conditions necessary for establishing their own state, and that Israel would facilitate the process by changing its current policies. Both parties understood their obligations under the Quartet Road Map and knew what needed to be done in order to fulfil them.

10. The Palestine refugee issue was the most complicated aspect of the Palestinian question. The Agency's role was critical in providing for their fundamental needs pending a just solution, and the accomplishments of the Agency and its staff, under very difficult circumstances, had been commendable. He welcomed progress in the reform process and the new structure of the Advisory Commission, which enhanced relations between the stakeholders and Palestine refugees.

11. Turkey was an emerging donor country for a number of United Nations programmes and funds, and it had more than doubled its annual voluntary contribution to the Agency for 2006. Turkey also provided in kind assistance and channelled direct assistance to Palestine through a plan of action that complemented the Agency's programmes.

12. **Mr. Elshérbini** (Egypt) said that, despite the work carried out by the Agency, the suffering of the Palestinian people continued to increase because of the deterioration in the humanitarian conditions in the West Bank and Gaza and because of occupation practices such as military assaults and restrictions on freedom of movement. His Government was concerned by the increase in the difficulties faced by the Agency as a result of occupation practices, lack of a political settlement and underfunding.

13. The Agency should step up its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance. Without international assistance, poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, economic stagnation and the level of basic public services were growing steadily worse, and there had been an increase in the number of displaced persons as a result of Israeli aggressions.

14. The restrictions on movement and curfews imposed by the Government of Israel had hindered the Agency's work and cut off refugees from their families, places of work, schools and medical services. He called for the removal of all restrictions on the movement of the Agency's staff and vehicles, and for compliance with the Agreement on Movement and Access in order to guarantee the delivery of food supplies and humanitarian assistance. That easing of restrictions would reduce feelings of frustration and isolation and lay the groundwork for rebuilding confidence and moving towards the resumption of the settlement process. The Government of Israel must respect the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the illegality of the construction of the separation wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory because that construction had significant humanitarian, economic and political consequences. The Agency's ability to carry out its mandate in Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and Jordan could be compromised in future by the lack of political horizon for a settlement and the suspension of peace negotiations aimed at establishing an independent Palestinian State and the Israeli evacuation from all Arab territories that had been occupied since 1967.

15. It was important to address the underfunding of the Agency and to strengthen donor countries' contributions and responses to emergency appeals. In that connection, his Government welcomed the enlargement of the membership of the Advisory Commission to include some donor countries and the meeting that had been convened in June 2006 to consider the Agency's strategy for development.

16. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that the UNRWA report highlighted the valiant and extraordinary work it was doing to improve the overall living conditions of the Palestine refugees, more often than not under extremely difficult conditions. After five decades, UNRWA was providing indispensable services to the 4.3 million registered refugees in the occupied territories. Their need was greater than ever before, because Israel was still engaging in inhumane practices under its illegal occupation.

17. UNRWA services offered the barely minimum level of assistance needed to allow the refugees to live decent and productive lives, which was their right. The Agency acted as an advocate for the rights of the refugees and sought to uphold them. Its work had a positive impact on the stability of the region.

18. Two developments marked the period covered by the report: the deteriorating living conditions of the Palestine refugees as a result of the declining human development indicators and the economic collapse in the Occupied Palestinian Territories since the victory

of Hamas in the legislative elections; and the decline of voluntary contributions in relation to UNRWA programme expenditures creating a large regular budget deficit for 2006. That shortfall did not bode well for the quality and level of UNRWA services and the emergency relief assistance available and would have dire consequences for the Palestine refugees who depended on them.

19. His delegation appealed to all Governments, financial institutions and donors to raise their contributions until the Agency's 2006-2007 budget was fully financed. Qatar spared no effort in extending all possible material and moral support to the refugees, and was committed to doing so as long as necessary. It was the international community's responsibility to continue supporting UNRWA until a just, comprehensive and lasting solution was found to the refugee problem and to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a whole.

20. **Mr. Saradgi** (India) said that support for the Palestinian cause had been a central feature of his Government's foreign policy for more than 60 years. His Government had maintained that violence was a serious impediment to the peace process and the real solution would lie in political dialogue. Paragraph 14 of the Commissioner-General's report indicated that the economy of the Palestinian Authority had suffered immeasurably as a result of the ongoing conflict. The widespread increase in poverty and unemployment, coupled with the decreasing revenues of the Palestinian Authority, had brought the economy to the verge of collapse. Furthermore, the separation wall, closures, curfews and other restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities would lead to further hardship for the affected Palestinian population. The continued construction of the wall on Palestinian land also threatened to prejudge the eventual outcome of the final status negotiations between the parties.

21. His Government had called for an urgent easing of the restrictions placed on the Palestinian areas and had manifested its support to the Palestinian people through regular assistance and the provision of medical supplies to the Palestinian Authority. In May 2006, in response to a request from the Palestinian Authority, his Government had provided medicines and medical supplies to the Palestinian people. India had also been a regular, albeit modest, contributor to the Agency's budget.

22. The environment in which the Agency carried out its operations continued to hamper its ability to deliver services. His Government was concerned at the restrictions on the Agency's movements and called for their removal. The Agency's activities represented an important component in the struggle for the realization of peace in the Middle East, and the international community should live up to its shared responsibility to support them. In particular, the Mideast Quartet should urge all sides to fulfil their obligations. His Government was confident that a just and comprehensive solution to the conflict was attainable and called on all sides to work together to achieve the vision of two States living side by side within secure and recognized borders.

23. **Mr. Ali** (Sudan) welcomed the efforts made under the Commissioner-General of UNRWA to broaden the good services UNRWA had long been providing to the refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in the countries hosting Palestine refugees. His delegation also endorsed the steps taken to reform the Agency's planning in order to improve programme quality.

24. The escalating Israeli threats against the Palestinians and the consequent deterioration of the economic, social and humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as the deliberate destruction of infrastructure, had placed a greater burden on UNRWA. Israel's closure policy had transformed the Gaza Strip into a huge prison, destroyed economic activity and employment opportunities there and doubled poverty. The restrictions on the movement of Palestinians had been applied also to Agency staff and vehicles, causing delays or cancellation of services, extra costs to the Agency, and food shortages among the more vulnerable refugees.

25. The separation wall, which Israel was determined to construct despite the International Court of Justice advisory opinion condemning it, had aggravated the suffering of the people, further damaged the economy and created infrastructural problems. In addition to escalating violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Israel had complicated the situation of the Palestine refugees in Lebanon with its recent war there. UNRWA was to be commended for the services it had provided during that period of violence. Its staff should be on an equal footing with other United Nations personnel and should be compensated for the danger to which they had exposed themselves. Thanks were due

also to Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan for hosting Palestine refugees without discrimination and for their excellent cooperation with UNRWA in all its initiatives to improve the living conditions in the camps.

26. The Palestine refugee question would be resolved only as part of a larger solution that included the withdrawal of Israel from the territories it had occupied, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, especially resolution 194 (III) upholding the refugees' right of return and right to compensation with the Charter of the United Nations and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Until then, the international community was responsible for the well-being of the refugees.

27. The Sudan was very concerned about the large UNRWA budget deficit. All States should contribute more, either financially or in kind, so that the Agency could continue to fulfil its mandate.

28. **Mr. Landemoen** (Norway) expressed his Government's deep concern at the warning by United Nations organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross that violence, humiliation and poverty were leading the Palestinian population towards a deep crisis. Women and children were suffering the most in that situation. In 2005, the Gaza disengagement had raised expectations of an improvement in the quality of life and in the freedom of movement of Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank. However, in 2006 focus had shifted to the most immediate needs of the refugee population; food distribution and survival had become the most pressing issues. His Government had tried to keep international attention focused on the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian Territory at a time when the whole world was preoccupied with the tragedy in Lebanon. To that end, it had co-hosted donor conferences in Geneva and Stockholm in recent months. In the expectation that needs would continue to increase, his Government would increase its contribution to the Agency by 50 per cent in 2007 and would continue to be an active participant in the dialogue on efforts to strengthen the working relationship between the Agency, host nations and donor countries.

29. **Mr. Bowman** (Canada) reaffirmed his Government's strong commitment to the Agency. Canada appreciated the opportunity it had been given to become a member of the Advisory Commission. The management changes under way within the Agency represented important steps in enhancing effectiveness and improving partnerships and accountability. Improved management and programming were key to maintaining donor support and meeting the humanitarian needs of the Palestine refugees. The Agency's role in providing essential education, health and social services to the refugees was especially important at a time when the humanitarian and security situation was deteriorating. His Government continued to support the work carried out by the Agency. In addition to the contribution of $10 million to the Agency's core budget in 2006, his Government had contributed $8.5 million in response to emergency appeals. His Government believed that it was essential to work with increased commitment and intensity to achieve a comprehensive political settlement to the conflict in the Middle East and realize the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security.

30. **Ms. Liu** Jia (China) commended the Agency and its staff on all their efforts, which were performed with dedication in arduous and often dangerous circumstances, and expressed regret that funding difficulties faced by the Agency over the last few years had impeded its work. Accordingly, she called on the international community to honour its pledges and step up its support to UNRWA.

31. Noting that the current deadlock in the Middle East peace process had negative consequences for the entire region and was in no one's interests, she appealed to the Palestinian and Israeli leaders to show the necessary political courage and to abide by their commitments in relaunching the process, while rejecting outside influences. For its part, the international community should set in place a climate conducive to that process. She reaffirmed China's commitment to achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East through negotiations between all parties, and pledged her country's readiness to continue working with the international community to that end.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.21

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 21st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 2 November 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*)

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06-59826 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/61/13, 172, 278, 347 and 358)

1. **Mr. Gidor** (Israel) said that assistance to the Palestinian people was central to Israeli policy, for improving their economic and living conditions was integral to stability in the region. Israel also continued to attach great significance to the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and understood the difficult conditions under which the Agency operated. While it was his Government's policy to facilitate the Agency's operations as much as possible, it was very often prevented from doing so by murderous terrorist activities that disrupted any normalcy. That was the crux of the matter: security issues unfortunately impinged on the smooth operation of UNRWA. Since 2005, for instance, there had been 11 often deadly attacks on the main humanitarian crossing point between Israel and the Gaza Strip alone. The 1967 agreement between Israel and UNRWA had foreseen that military security needs might become a factor; and UNRWA itself had accepted the reality that restrictions on movement of goods and individuals might at times be necessary if only to protect the lives also of its own personnel. Even so, notwithstanding the unavoidable restrictions on various crossing points, there had been a marked increase in the Palestinian trade flow and a concomitant if modest improvement in the Palestinian economic indicators.

2. There had been two major developments in 2006, since the period covered by the Commissioner-General's report (A/61/13): the election of a Hamas terrorist Government, which had triggered a chain of events leading to more hardship for all in the region; and the Palestinian terrorist attack in June 2006, which had demanded an Israeli military response.

3. Israel had hoped that, once it had left Gaza, the Palestinian Authority would boost its nation-building efforts and take over the UNRWA responsibilities related to education, health and food security, but unfortunately the challenge had not been met.

4. The report produced by the Commissioner-General was refreshingly factual, balanced and forward looking. Indeed, the dialogue between UNRWA and the Israeli authorities had in 2006 been most constructive and there had been good coordination on both general and practical issues.

5. Each year in the Committee, there was a long parade of Arab diplomats outdoing each other in expressions of hyperbolic sympathy for the suffering of the Palestinian refugees. The hard facts, however, spoke differently. According to the UNRWA website, the most generous donors to its 2005 budget were the European Union, followed by the United States of America and then Japan and a number of other European countries. The only Arab country that had made an even comparable contribution had been Saudi Arabia; the other States in the region, if they gave at all, had made contributions that were only a small fraction of those of the other donors. It was true that the Syrian Arab Republic had transferred significant sums to the Palestinian Authority, but that money had unfortunately gone to funding terrorist cells and jihadist organizations rather than to the Palestinian refugees. In short, not a single Arab country was prepared to spend any more than a miniscule part of its ever-increasing oil revenues in order to help alleviate their plight. At the same time, his Arab colleagues preferred to continue squandering the United Nations budget on repetitive sessions, inefficient committees, endless resolutions and useless documents which did absolutely nothing to improve the situation on the ground or help the prospects for peace.

6. UNRWA had after almost 60 years become the second biggest employer within the Palestinian Authority, performing functions normally undertaken by a government, namely, elementary education, public health and food security; and Israel believed that actually served to perpetuate the problem. In the long term, such daily tasks and the budgets for them should be transferred from the Agency to governmental bodies in the Palestinian Authority, in Jordan and elsewhere.

7. All people should be able to live in security and peace and to prosper. The Palestinians were not Israel's enemies, they were its neighbours. Israel sought to live side by side with them in mutual respect and dignity. Both peoples' suffering was a humanitarian problem and both peoples' right to self-determination must be respected.

8. **Mr. Ross** (United States of America) said that his Government, concerned about the hardships the Palestinian people faced, was providing close to $500 million in assistance for their basic social and

private sector needs. As the largest contributor to UNRWA after the European Union, it had consistently demonstrated its support for humanitarian relief for the Palestinian refugees and it urged other countries, especially those within the region, to give more to the Agency's core budget.

9. UNRWA was a stabilizing force in the region. As the main provider of education, primary health services and other humanitarian assistance for 70 per cent of the population in Gaza and 30 per cent in the West Bank, its role in those fields had been especially critical since the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections. The failure of the government of the Palestinian Authority to renounce terror, recognize Israel and respect previous agreements continued to create unnecessary hardships for the Palestinian people.

10. His Government was pleased that UNRWA had responded to recommendations to improve its management by designing a three-year organizational development process and that it was in the process of improving its planning by developing an overall programme strategy. The newly expanded Advisory Commission was providing substantive advice to the Commissioner-General on matters related to programming and the budget.

11. Consistent with United Nations reform and revitalization efforts, the United States of America again called upon the General Assembly to expedite its work by biennializing and triennializing items where possible. His delegation believed that it was unnecessary to continue to adopt additional resolutions on UNRWA at that juncture.

12. **Mr. Gebreel** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Government of Israel was responsible for the situation on the ground in the Occupied Territories. The report showed the indifference of the Israeli occupying forces to international laws and humanitarian norms, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The continuing construction of the separation wall had restricted the movements of people and had prevented the Agency from gaining access to refugee camps. Attacks on Agency institutions and staff had continued, a number of civilian casualties had been reported and the standard of living had dropped below the poverty line. As witnessed in July 2006, the Israeli authorities had extended their attacks to camps in southern Lebanon. It was important to consider the political origin of the situation and remember that the work of the Agency must be a temporary arrangement until a final solution was found that included the return of the refugees to the homes from which they had been evacuated.

13. **Mr. Al-Zayani** (Bahrain) said that the report and the introductory statement by the UNRWA Commissioner-General drew attention to both the Agency's setbacks and its achievements. The Working Group on the Financing of the Agency had commended the role of the Commissioner-General and her oversight of the reform process. There was no doubt that the establishment of the Advisory Commission would allow for a review of the Agency's programme of work, including efforts to increase its administrative and humanitarian capacity.

14. The hostile campaign of the Israeli forces against the Palestinian people had led to casualties and a deterioration in the living conditions of Palestinians. The restrictions in movement and curfews had resulted in increased poverty and unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, divided the occupied territories and hindered the Agency's capacity to fulfil its mandate of providing humanitarian assistance and promoting human resource development, in violation of the agreements concluded between the Agency and the Government of Israel. The continued construction of the separation wall, contrary to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice had accentuated the economic downturn. Furthermore, the separation wall, curfews and land confiscation were the most influential factors in determining the living conditions of the Palestinians and greatly restricted the potential for urban and agricultural development in that region.

15. The Working Group's report showed that the 2006-2007 budget was 30 per cent lower than in the previous biennium. It was important to reduce that funding deficit in order to allow the Agency to fulfil its mandate and cope with the increase in the number of refugees. A needs-based funding approach not subject to financial restrictions should be adopted that would make it possible to fully fund programmes, enhance refugees' financial means and meet their basic needs. Funding difficulties notwithstanding, the support of donors had enabled the Agency to make considerable progress. His delegation was confident that the Agency would be able to transcend the financial crisis and move ahead with reform plans. At the core of the humanitarian crisis was a political problem and it was important for the Agency to continue its indispensable

work until a solution could be found in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

16. **Mr. Al-Maamari** (Oman) said that his delegation appreciated the work of the Agency in assisting the refugees who suffered displacement, deprivation and lack of basic services. It was the responsibility of the occupying forces to alleviate the suffering of all refugees in the Occupied Territories. While the Agency's main role under its mandate was to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and not to address political problems, in practice there was a link between providing humanitarian assistance and the political dimensions of the refugee problem. The Agency should highlight in its reports the root causes of refugee suffering. It was obvious that such suffering was caused by the bombing, killing, demolition of houses, deportation and construction of the separation wall carried out by the Israeli occupying forces.

17. General Assembly resolution 194 (III) stipulated that the right of return of all the Palestine refugees and the right to compensation of those refugees who did not wish to return was a prerequisite for establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The conflict in the Middle East was a result of the Government of Israel's refusal to abide by international law. His delegation recognized the right of all refugees to return to their homeland in accordance with international law and called on Member States to put pressure on Israel to end its practices against Palestinians, stop hindering the work of the Agency and fulfil its international obligations. Member States should maintain their support for the Agency and those host countries that had accepted the refugees.

18. **Ms. Al Alaoui** (Morocco) expressed appreciation to the host countries for their support of the refugees and to the donors for their financial assistance. It was important to consider the activities of the Agency in the context of the very serious situation in the Middle East. The suspension of international assistance, the economic blockade, the demolition of homes and the construction of the separation wall had sparked a humanitarian crisis and had stretched the Agency's resources. The Agency should be supported in carrying out its important task of providing basic services to the refugees.

19. She called on Israel to put an end to its restrictions on the Agency and to allow it to fulfil its mandate. Until a final and just solution was found to the question of Palestine refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III), Member States should maintain or increase their financial support for the Agency, with a view to enabling it to fulfil its mandate in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan. Her Government fully supported the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the pursuit of a just and comprehensive peace agreement in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the road map.

20. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) commended UNRWA for meeting new challenges in the midst of the violence and military activity in the Middle East. Many of the issues raised in the Commissioner-General's report were symptoms of a much larger issue: the fundamental injustice at the root of the conflict. Each party was forced to live in fear either of potentially deadly acts of terror or of potentially deadly military incursions.

21. The centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the instability in the Middle East could not be ignored. The Holy See remained convinced that the two-State solution was the basis for resolving the crisis, for it would permit Israelis to live in security in their own land and Palestinians to live safely in a viable State of their own. That could be achieved only if the international community, and in particular the Quartet, shouldered the responsibility that fell to them of speedily engaging the Israelis and Palestinians in substantive dialogue coupled with dispute resolution, while maintaining a balanced approach in negotiations that avoided the insistence on preconditions.

22. A lasting solution must also determine the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem. In view of the restrictions on free movement posed by the security barrier, the Holy See reiterated its support for internationally guaranteed provisions that ensured freedom of religion and of conscience for the inhabitants of Jerusalem as well as unhindered access to the holy places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities. Only through a just and lasting peace — not imposed, but secured through negotiation and reasonable compromise — would the legitimate aspirations of all the people of the Holy Land be fulfilled.

23. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that once again Israel

had attempted to whitewash ugly facts and had put forward nauseating lies to the effect that his country was supporting jihadist and other terrorist movements. The image of the Israeli occupation, however, could not be beautified: the facts concerning Zionist terrorism, committed covertly by successive Israeli Governments over five decades, were well documented. Only that morning there had been a deadly Israeli incursion into Gaza.

24. It was the historic responsibility of the United Nations to secure the inalienable rights of the Palestine refugees, particularly the right to return to their homelands — guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights — and their right to compensation.

25. Syrian assistance to the Palestinian people could not be calculated in figures but rather in terms of the economic burden his Government assumed in seeking to provide a decent standard of living for the Palestine refugees until they were able to return.

26. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that despite the Israeli delegation's protestation of his Government's supposedly benevolent policies and service to millions of Palestinians, it was clear that the Palestinian people had never chosen to live for decades in deprivation and destitution, or to be denied the right to claim what was theirs. That was the core of the issue and the key to its resolution. He wondered what kind of reaction one would expect from the Palestinian people that Israel might find appropriate. The Palestinian people, having endured bombardment and the miserable conditions imposed by the occupying Power, had valid security needs which they must defend.

27. The United Nations must free them from a life of daily terror. Peace must be the aim. The perpetuation of Israeli occupation and constant violation of every human right, especially the recognized right of return, could not be countenanced.

28. **Mr. Al-Otaibi** (Kuwait), responding to the Israeli delegation's purported concern for UNRWA financing, observed that the Arab countries contributed to the Palestinian refugees through the Arab League in amounts that went far beyond the entire budget of UNRWA.

29. Israel was the cause of the problem, with its continuing occupation and inhuman practices. It should abide by its agreement with UNRWA and lift restrictions on the movement of the Agency's personnel, and fulfil its international obligations to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian people and work towards a permanent and comprehensive settlement of the problem in the Middle East.

30. **Ms. Koning AbuZayd** (Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) observed that the broad, consistent financial and institutional support of diverse Governments — the Agency's biggest donors with their contributions to the General Fund and the emergency projects, the host countries, and the Arab Gulf countries, with their contributions to projects and infrastructure that were not costed so clearly in the annual report but were certainly a major input — was compelling confirmation that the international community remained committed to the well-being of the Palestine refugees. The support was critical in the light of the current conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza. She had made note of the statements made by members of the Committee on the various aspects of the problem. She had also taken note of the positive developments in the region, such as Lebanon's early recovery from a devastating conflict and the Government's landmark decision to allow for an improvement of refugee living conditions.

31. She hoped that renewed engagement by the international community to resolve the conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory would improve the untenable humanitarian situation, in the midst of which the Agency, with its improved management and programme planning, remained an essential lifeline.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.